

GOLF

EXCLUSIVE

JASON DAY!

How to Play Like
a Champion



DAY TELLS ALL:

The Major Winner
On His Turbulent
Path to Golf Glory P. 68

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YES! GOLF CAN BE FUN

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COVER STORY

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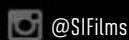
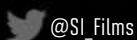
GOALS, GOONS AND GARBAGE

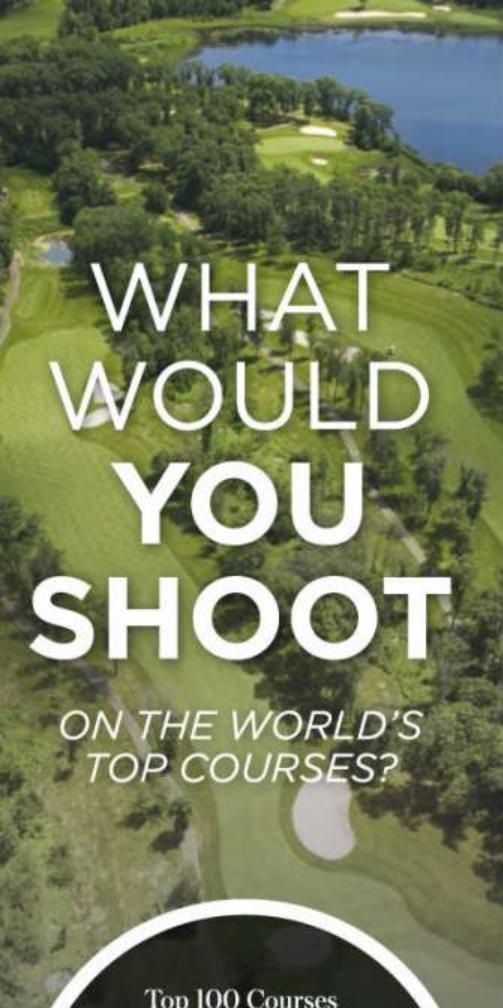
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David M. Clarke, Editor

A NEW DAY FOR JASON, AND GOLF

» I ONCE MET a millionaire who had just joined a private club. His money bought him a lot of options. I asked him how he'd settled on his membership of choice. Was it the course design? The amenities? "I just wanted a place I'd be proud to bring my friends," he said.

This month, I invite you to a club I'm very proud of: a brand-new GOLF. Consider yourself a member with full privileges. You'll notice a lot of improvements. Led by creative director Paul Crawford and executive editor Connell Barrett, our team worked hard to reinvent this magazine. We have a new look, new columnists and three new sections, including the Performance Center, which includes 17 pages of stroke-saving tips from our Top 100 Teachers. I think it's the best instruction section, well, ever. Because while we've made many changes, our primary mission is the same: to help you play better now.

Of course, a special issue calls for a special cover story, and I'm thrilled to feature the game's hottest player: Jason Day. To me, Day personifies the concept of redemption. As you'll read in our cover story, Jason used his turbulent childhood in hardscrabble Australia as fuel to become first a world-class golfer, then a major champion. And there's more to the 27-year-old than 380-yard drives. He's intelligent, honest, popular with his fellow players, and, as we saw at Whistling Straits, emotionally vulnerable. That Sunday he connected with fans in a refreshingly authentic way, reminding me of another beloved golf great. Say good-bye to Jason Day, the underachiever. Meet



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Jason Day, the Aussie Arnie.

That's what I love about golf. The game allows you to start over and reinvent yourself. You can change a swing, a magazine, or even an entire career trajectory.

So start a new journey with us. Come on in, make yourself at home, and welcome to the club.

David M. Clarke, Editor

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Now on the Tee: Your Raves, Rants and Reactions



WHICH
SEPTEMBER
STORIES AND
COLUMNS DREW
THE MOST LETTERS?

Your Game:	39%
The GOLF Interview: Zach Johnson:	28%
Michael Bamberger: "The Professionals":	11%
Other:	22%



ZACH ADDICT

» **KUDOS** to Jessica Marksbury for her interview with Zach Johnson ("How Does Zach Do It?", September 2015). It seems that we had a model, though not quite so talented, for Jordan Spieth before there was a Jordan.

—JACK MAHAN, PINEHURST, N.C.

KNOW YOUR ROLL

» **DAVE PELZ** is 100 percent correct in his advice to watch putts go by the hole in order to learn what to do with the next putt ("Watch the Roll Past the Hole," September 2015). However, I think he was a little too casual with his return-putt adjustment advice of "cutting the amount of break in half." It's not that easy. His method works well for a mostly level putt that goes three feet past the hole, but a sidehill putt

on a steep slope that curves past the hole and then turns 90 degrees downhill might easily be a straight putt coming back. Bottom line: Always watch what the putt does past the hole, but know that learning is not a simple algorithm; it requires focus and experience. Paying close attention will pay dividends in the long run, though.

—MIKE WALTERS, ATLANTA, GA.

E-MC HAMMERED!

» **I ENJOYED Brooks Koepka's recent cover story ("Big Drives Now!," September 2015). As a retired mechanical engineer, I could not help but notice that Brooks suggested driving your feet into the ground to add power but failed to explain how this is accomplished. What's required? Well, your body mass must accelerate upward, per Newton's second law of motion (the net force equals mass times acceleration). Two vertical forces act upon your body during the swing: your constant downward weight (negative) and the upward ground reaction on your feet (positive). To increase the ground reaction magnitude above that of your weight, your body must accelerate upward, per the second law, and the upward acceleration to generate more ground reaction in a golf swing arises from posting up on your leading leg.**

—WALLY MARKS, VIA E-MAIL



WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? »

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TEeing OFF

1 of 3

THESE GUYS ARE MAJOR PLAYERS

Jordan Spieth, Zach Johnson and Jason Day gave the game a season to remember

BY CAMERON MORFIT

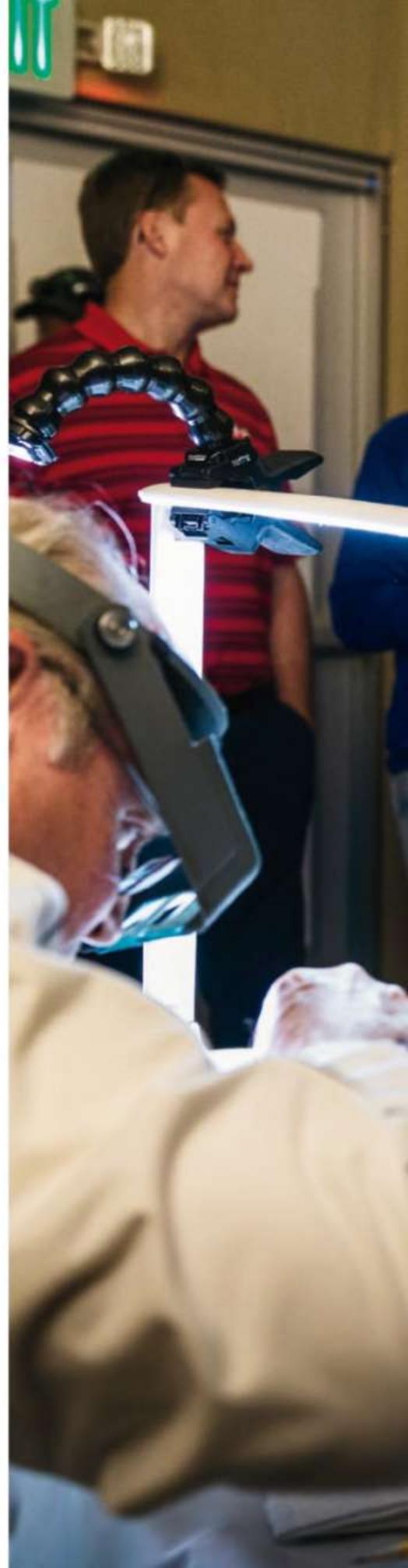
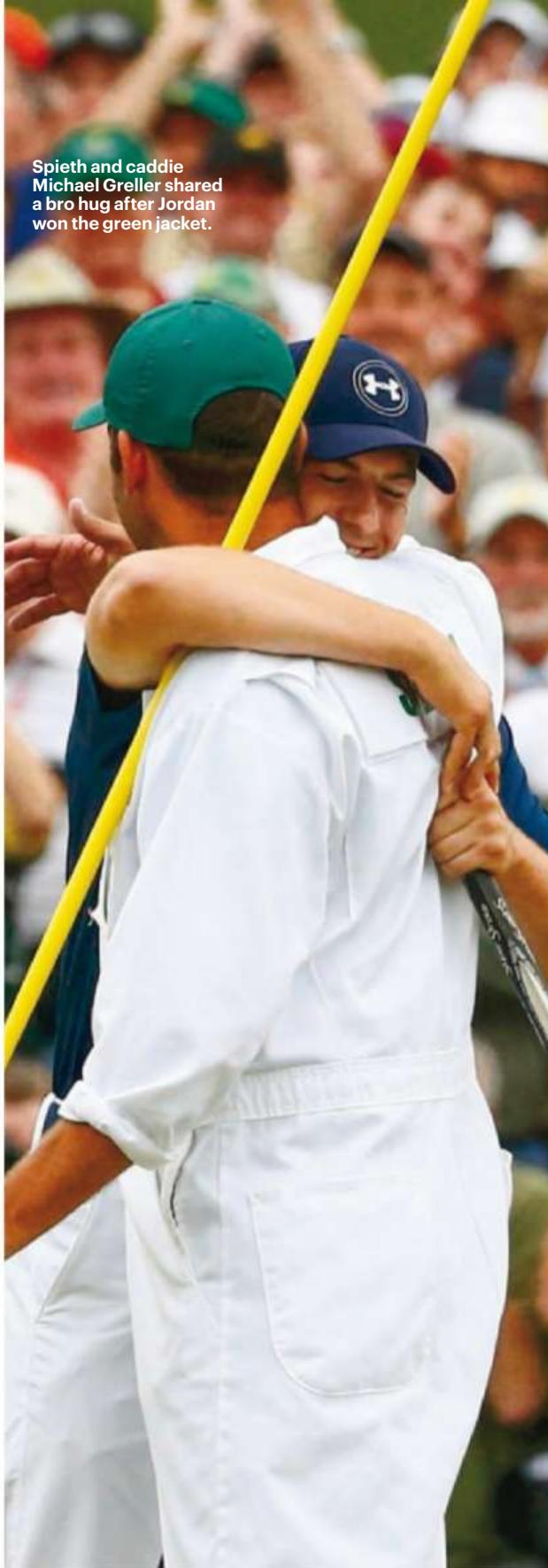
» Has there ever been a better group of major winners than those we watched in 2015? Maybe—but not many. There was 2000 (Vijay Singh, Tiger, Tiger, Tiger), as well as 1962 (Palmer, Nicklaus, Palmer, Player). And it's hard to top 1972 (Nicklaus, Nicklaus, Trevino, Player). Add this season to the conversation. Jordan Spieth, Zach Johnson and Jason Day authored one heck of a story.

The first chapter came at the Masters, where Spieth, then 21, led wire to wire. His 18-under total matched Tiger Woods's record total in 1997, when Woods was also 21.

Two months later, Spieth won the U.S. Open at beautifully flawed Chambers

»

Spieth and caddie Michael Greller shared a bro hug after Jordan won the green jacket.



photos: REUTERS/
MARK BLINCH (L),
USGA/DARREN
CARROLL (R)



Spieth made history, then recorded it, snapping a shot of his name being engraved on the U.S. Open trophy.

TEEING OFF

2 of 3

» Bay, thanks in part to Dustin Johnson's three-putt at the 72nd hole. Suddenly, a calendar-year grand slam was a real prospect for the first time since Woods won the season's first two majors in 2002.

At that year's British, Woods succumbed to lousy weather and never contended. But Spieth, with the eyes of the world upon him, survived spitting rain and howling wind to give himself a chance as he came to the final two holes at St. Andrews. Not since Jack Nicklaus took on Lee Trevino at the 1972 Open Championship had a player come so close to a trifecta.

Alas, there would be no shocking, Trevino-style chip-in to spoil this party. Instead, Spieth's bogey on 17 and failure to birdie 18 left him a shot shy of the three-man playoff ultimately won by gritty, 39-year-old Zach Johnson.

The slam was off. »

photo:
JANE BARLOW/
PHOTOSPORT/
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Johnson high-fived (and low-fived) fans after his feel-good win on the Old Course at St. Andrews.

TEeing OFF

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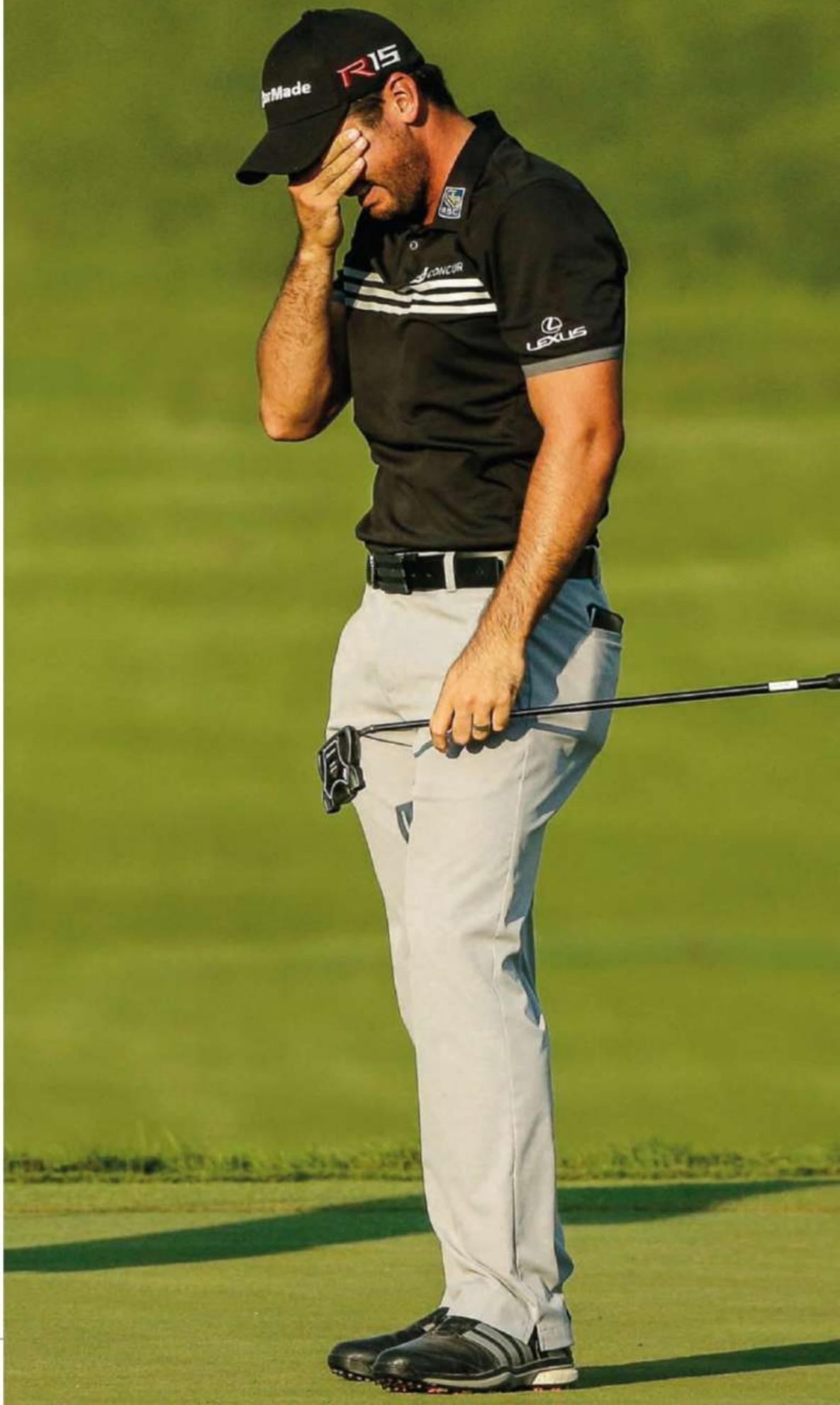
» If there was a better bad-weather performance than Johnson's in 2015, we didn't see it. He shot a final-round 66, then made two straight birdies to open the four-hole aggregate playoff and rock playing partners Marc Leishman and Louis Oosthuizen. It was a master class in clutch.

And then there was Day. At 27, he (finally!) broke through at the PGA Championship, holding off none other than Spieth. Day's 20-under total was the best-ever four-round score in any major. The Aussie's emotional victory also announced him as a force to be reckoned with for years to come, and he joined Spieth and Rory McIlroy as the game's new Big Three. (We'll see if Rickie Fowler makes it a foursome in 2016.)

Four majors. Three great champions. One unforgettable year.

● (For a whole lot more from Jason Day—including our exclusive interview—turn to p. 68.) 

photo: CHRIS CARLSON/AP





After many close calls, Day bagged his first major, at Whistling Straits—and the emotions poured out.



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A Ford SUV is shown driving through a desert landscape. The vehicle is positioned in the lower half of the frame, moving from left to right, kicking up dust. The background features a vast, arid plain leading to a range of mountains under a clear sky. The word "OPPABLE" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the middle-left portion of the image.

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EDITED BY CONNELL BARRETT



EYE TO EYE

He Won't Back Down

» **YOU'VE HAD A SOLID year as a Tour rookie, with more than \$1 million in earnings. Your highlight came at the Wells Fargo Championship, where you got into the field as a sponsor's exemption and then finished second to Rory McIlroy. Did you surprise yourself that week?**

I left Stanford a year early [to turn professional], so that decision reflected how confident I am. I can compete out here and win. The Wells Fargo was just validation that I can be up there with the best players in the world and give myself a chance on the weekend. I was really comfortable playing late on Sunday. It's addicting. I'm excited to get back there.

With length and confidence to burn, rookie **Patrick Rodgers**, 23, has already battled Rory and banked a cool million. Life is good in Mr. Rodgers's neighborhood.

INTERVIEW BY JESSICA MARKSBURY

Portrait by DAN BANNISTER

McIlroy won comfortably, but on the back nine on Sunday, you were within three shots of his lead. Did you say, "I have a chance!"?

It was crazy. Going into the [final round], I was pretty far behind. I knew it would take a really good round to compete. I looked up at the leaderboard on 14 and saw that I was only four back. I went birdie-birdie [on Nos. 14 and »

EYE TO EYE Patrick Rodgers

15], so I thought that I might have a shot if I made a couple of birdies coming in. Then I looked up and Rory was still well ahead of me, so I tried to keep the pedal down and play aggressively, and I made some mistakes. But I didn't back down, and I'm proud of that.

As a Tour rookie, which older players have you turned to for mentorship?

Zach Johnson has been such a high-class guy to me. He's in a position with all of his accomplishments that he really doesn't have much reason to hang out with a young Tour rookie, and he's been over-the-top nice, trying to help me out with anything I need. I've always had so much respect for him and his game and his approach, and I've looked up to him for a long time. He wasn't the best player on his high school team or at Drake University, and now he's a perfect example of hard work paying off.

You and fellow Tour rookie Justin Thomas are roommates in Florida. What's that like?

Justin and I have been good friends since our junior golf days. We go to the beach all the time, and we both love sports, so we'll hit up sporting goods stores—we bought a football to throw on the beach. And we put up a mini [basketball] hoop on our front door. We need to repaint soon because there are a lot of dings from the missed shots. [Laughs] We definitely have a good time off the course.

We're envisioning a bachelor pad where all the young

Rodgers's runner-up finish to McIlroy at Quail Hollow is his best Tour finish to date.


ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE
» YOU HAVE TO PLAY THE LONG GAME

My dad, Charlie, always talks to me about how golf is a marathon and not a sprint. It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day emotional grind, and it's really important to take a broad perspective on everything. With my game, I trust that if I refine my process and I do the right things on a day-to-day basis, the results at the end of this big, long marathon that is my golf career will be what I want them to be, and I'll be really fulfilled with how I went about doing everything. That's how I try to live my life.

pros in the Jupiter, Fla., area congregate during off-weeks. Yeah, well [our house] was Peter Uihlein's and Brooks Koepka's place last year, and I guess it's been passed down. There are so many young guys that live [in Jupiter, Fla.]. It's been just a ton of fun living there.

Thomas and Jordan Spieth are big-time pranksters.
Do you get involved?

I'll get burned if I get into that, so I try to stay out of it. Justin usually tries to get under Jordan's skin, but Jordan usually gets the upper hand.

You cracked the top 10 in driving distance this year. Before you turned pro, you made news for another reason: In college, at Stanford, you tied Tiger Woods's school record of 11 collegiate wins. How much did Tiger inspire you?

Growing up, I was extremely passionate about golf. I was 8 or 9 when he was winning his Tiger Slam [2000-01], so I grew up cheering like heck for him every time he was on TV. Tiger made golf cool and inspired me to work hard.

Do you think Woods can bounce back from his current slump?

Ups and downs are inevitable in golf. He's too good a player to not bounce back, so I think we all expect him to have success again soon.

You're from Avon, a small town in central Indiana. On your Twitter profile, you list "Avon High School class of '11" before anything else. Is that Hoosier pride?

Absolutely. I'm really proud to be from Indiana. More and more golfers are coming from Indiana. It's incredible to be a Hoosier playing on the PGA Tour. I'm just so proud of where I came from. I try my hardest to represent my home state well.

Hoosier pride must explain the Indianapolis Colts staff bag that you carry.

I grew up a huge, huge Colts fan, and now I have a unique partnership with them. A lot of Colts players went to Stanford. [The Colts'] offensive coordinator is a Stanford guy, and the owner is a big golf fan. I get to represent my hometown team every week out on Tour. How cool is that? 



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BACKSPIN

BY ALAN SHIPNUCK



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SHORT SHOTS

CAPTAIN'S KID

Jay Haas should not have chosen his son **Bill** for the Presidents Cup. The kid failed to make the team on points, which put Pops in a no-win position. Meanwhile, **Brooks Koepka** and **Billy Horschel**—both bigger talents than Bill—were left off the squad. If anyone cared about the Presidents Cup, this would have been a genuine controversy.

THE FORGOTTEN YOUNG GUN

Speaking of Koepka, does CBS have a vendetta against him? The classy American—whose ballstriking **Steve Williams** has compared to Tiger's in his prime—finished T-5 at the PGA Championship, yet CBS didn't show one live shot of him on Sunday. And when Koepka, 25, won in Phoenix this year, he didn't illuminate TV screens until the 15th freakin' hole! Maybe he should wear orange pants and loud shirts.

HENRIK TENSION

The Tour is mostly a mental test. Ask **Henrik Stenson**, the world's best ballstriker who rarely wins. He rinsed one on the 70th hole in Boston, opening the door for **Rickie Fowler**. As Johnny would say: "That's pressure, Rog."

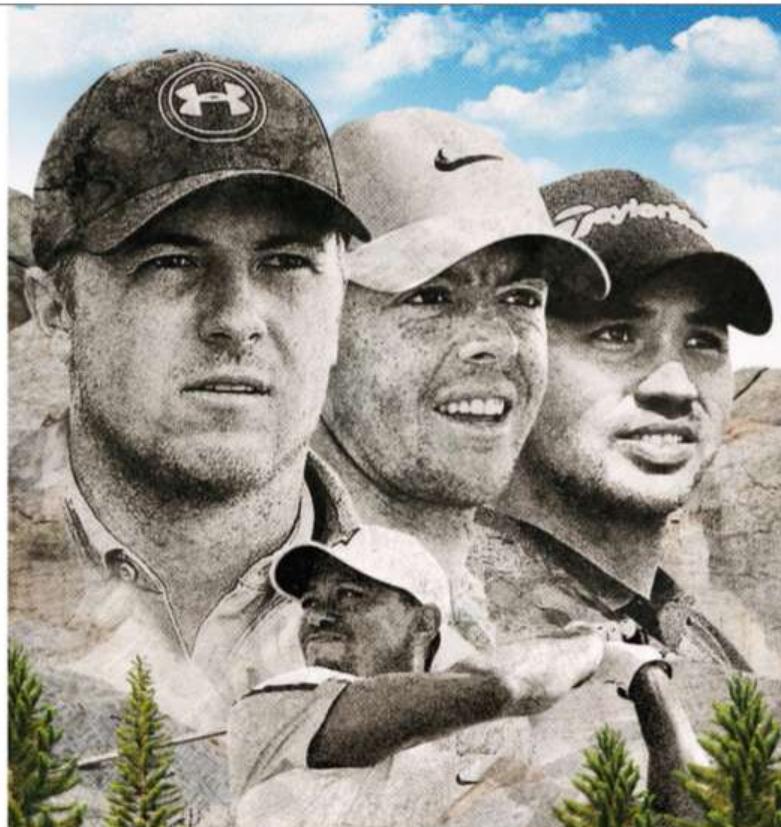
A Very Good Year

With Spieth, McIlroy and Day as the new Big Three, 2015 will go down as an epochal season on Tour

» **THE 2015** season was my 22nd covering the PGA Tour, and to be honest, it takes a little more to get my heart racing than it used to. I know this year was something special because there were two moments when I could barely breathe. The first came on the 72nd hole of the U.S. Open at Chambers Bay, as the riveting two-man drama between Jordan Spieth and Dustin Johnson played out. I walked up the fairway with Spieth and was standing maybe seven yards away when he hit that epic 3-wood, the flight of which has been forever burned into my mind's eye. A little while later, as Dustin Johnson stood over his four-foot putt to force a playoff, I became aware that I was taking short, choppy breaths, like a mom-to-be in the delivery room. I could only laugh at how invested this impartial observer had become in

the outcome. Scarcely a month later I was standing next to the Road Hole green while Spieth—chasing the third leg of the calendar-year Grand Slam—lined up one of the more important par puts in history. I could feel my pulse pounding in my forehead, and when I went to write something in my notebook, the tip of the pen snapped. I haven't experienced that kind of tension since the madcap final hole of the 2014 PGA Championship, when I was running in the near-darkness at Valhalla, my legs tingly from all the adrenaline.

That PGA was won by Rory McIlroy, of course. Rickie Fowler was in it until the bitter



Though he's no longer competitive, Tiger is more compelling than ever. His struggle has become a noble quest.

end, just as Jason Day factored in both Opens this year before his spectacular breakthrough at Whistling Straits, when he stared down Spieth. It takes a group of young players this exciting and appealing to make me respond on such a visceral level, and I'm guessing I'm not alone. (Johnson and Bubba Watson are a bit older but no less compelling.) Ever since Tiger Woods met the fire hydrant on a fateful

SHIPNUCK JAMES WESTMAN ILLUSTRATION SEAN MCCABE

MY BAG

Thanksgiving night in 2009, there has been fretting about golf's survival in the marketplace when he exits stage right. Now that we know how thrilling this new era is going to be, 2015 has earned a place in the pantheon of epochal seasons, alongside 1962 (Nicklaus usurping Palmer), 1977 (the beginning of the Watson era), 1985 (Langer and Lyle winning majors to touch off a decade of European dominance) and 1997 (Woods's arrival, natch). That Tiger is still around is merely a bonus. He may no longer be relevant competitively, but he is more compelling than ever in human terms. His struggle to find himself has turned into a noble quest. I never thought I would feel pity for this most imperious of athletes, yet I walked the last couple of holes with Woods at St. Andrews, and watching him miss the cut on his favorite course left me strangely melancholy. Tiger and I turned pro the same year—I graduated from UCLA in the spring of 1996, a few months before he left Stanford and had his "hello, world" moment. Living through the twilight of his career is like being confronted with your own mortality.

Meanwhile, the kids who've taken over the game offer the promise of an endless future. This neo-Big Three of Spieth, McIlroy and Day is a challenge for fans because they're all so darn likable. In any rivalry the protagonists are usually polarizing. In this case, you might root a little harder for one of these guys, but I have never heard anyone root against any of them. Saturday night at Whistling Straits I watched Day pound balls on the range until near dark. As he was walking off, our eyes locked for a second and I offered perfunctory good luck wishes for the next day. He said with a grin, "There's a lot to look forward to, mate." Indeed there is. ☀



Patrick Reed

This Ryder Cup star plays a full bag of Callaways

DRIVER

1) Callaway XR, 8.5°, Fujikura Fuel 75x shaft, 293 yards; \$300

FAIRWAY WOOD

2) Callaway X2 Hot Pro, 13.5°, Fujikura Fuel 85x, 260 yards; \$150

HYBRID

3) Callaway Big Bertha Alpha 815, 18°, Graphite Design Tour AD DI 95x, 245 yards; \$250

IRONS

4) Callaway X Forged '13 (4-iron), **Callaway RAZR X Muscleback** (5-PW), True Temper Dynamic Gold X100; price n/a
 4-iron: 225 yards
 5-iron: 215 yards
 6-iron: 205 yards
 7-iron: 185 yards
 8-iron: 175 yards
 9-iron: 165 yards
 PW: 145 yards

WEDGES

5) Callaway Mack Daddy 2 Tour Grind, 52°, 130 yards; 56°, 115 yards; 60°, 100 yards. All have True Temper Dynamic Gold X100; \$130

PUTTER »

6) Odyssey White Hot Pro #3; \$100

BALL

Callaway SR 3; \$40/dozen



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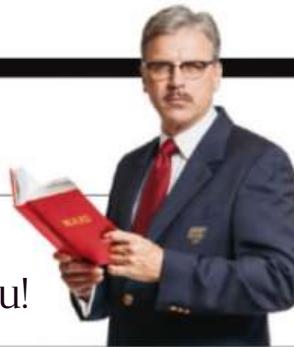


**THIS IS NOT A
METALWOOD.**



ASK THE RULES GUY

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Dear Rules Guy:

My opponent hit his approach into a bunker, where it ended up on top of a rake. He wanted to move the rake, let the ball come to rest and play it from there. I said he should simply mark the ball, move the rake and replace the ball. Help!

—DANIEL CARTER, SANTA FE, N.M.

To misquote Sam Cooke: "Don't know much about garden tools...." But I do know about rakes, at least as they pertain to the Rules. Bunker rakes are considered movable obstructions. Per

Rule 24-1b, your opponent must lift the ball, remove the rake, and take a drop as near as possible to the spot beneath its original position, then play without penalty. Oh, and a quick rant: The discourteous dolts who leave rakes in bunkers in the first place aren't penalized—but they should be.

Rules Man:

During play, one of my buddies likes to scuff the face of his wedge with sandpaper to get more spin. That can't possibly conform, can it?

—JEFF KANAS, LONG ISLAND, N.Y.

Is your friend a rebellious, smokin'-in-the-boys-room teenager? That may explain his nonconformist ways. Tell this rebel without a clue that clubs must follow the standards outlined by the USGA and the R&A, and that he's in clear violation. Purposely scuffing a wedge with sandpaper changes the club's playing characteristics, a clear breach of Rule 4-2. The penalties are stiff. Merely carrying the club, and not using it, can cost him up to four strokes in stroke play and the loss of two holes in match play. And if he

happens to make a stroke with his sandpapered club, he's disqualified. That should scare him straight. Better to have him follow my lead: I only use my 80-grit to sand down my maple golf-themed chess set. (And yes, Gary Player is a black knight.)

Rules Guy:

My Florida golf club features cart paths made of a limestone called coquina, the fragments of which often end up in players' spikes. The guy I was playing against picked up small pieces of coquina from the fringe to allow him to putt from off the green. I told him that sand and loose soil are only considered loose impediments when they're on the green, not the fringe. Was I right?

—MARK BENNETT, BONITA SPRINGS, FLA.

Ah, coquina—my favorite sedimentary rock after chert (humble chert gets no respect). Mark, you're right about one thing—sand and loose soil are considered loose impediments only on the putting green. But the Rules treat coquina fragments like gravel or stones, so per Rule 23-1, they can be removed without penalty, even when they lie off the green.

ILLUSTRATION: JASON RAISCH; RULES GUY: ERIN PATRICE O'BRIEN

GOT A RULES QUESTION?

» Of course you do! Whatever it may be, send yours to rulesguy@golf.com and the question may be answered in an upcoming issue of *Golf*. Until then, play by the Rules!

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Ex-hockey player David Lingmerth creates his own power play using

David hovers his clubhead—great for a smooth takeaway.



1

Right knee remains flexed in the backswing.



2

Flat takeaway—unusual but effective.



3



4

The squat helps shift his weight forward and speed up his hip turn.



9



10

What went down in the squat now thrusts up, creating an explosive impact.



11



12

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TOUR WINNER DAVID LINGMERTH, 28, isn't your typical bomber, coming in at five foot seven, 175 pounds. But the Swede used to play competitive hockey, so he knows how to leverage the ground to produce power, just as he would on the ice. ("Ground control" runs in the family; his uncle Goran was a placekicker for the Cleveland Browns in 1987.) With a win at this year's Memorial Tournament, followed by a top-20 finish at the PGA Championship, David is a rising star (Skipper Darren Clarke is no doubt eyeing Lingmerth for next year's Ryder Cup).



STATISTICS

The Line on Lingmerth

THROUGH THE BARCLAYS

290.3

yds
Avg. Driving
Distance

65.1%

Driving
Accuracy30thTotal Driving
Rank25thMoney
Leaders

the best-kept swing secret in the game

Right knee flexes even more—shades of Bernhard Langer.



5

Tucked right elbow keeps his swing flat but on plane.



6

And flatter still. Wow!



7

Here's the "squat." It's the best power move in golf.



8

Right-side tilt remains intact. Copy this!



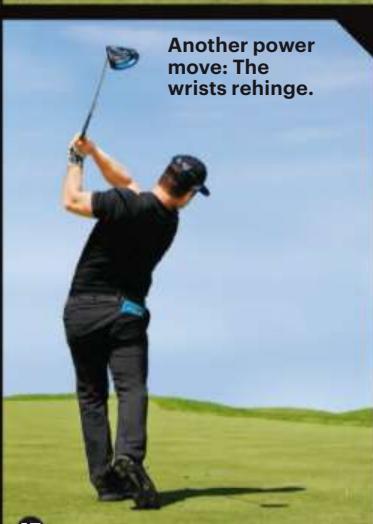
13

Another power move: The wrists rehinge.



14

Balanced with hands over left shoulder. Just perfect.



15



16

You can learn a lot from Lingmerth's unique technique. Notice how he maintains his knee flex throughout his backswing. Flexed knees equal good balance, which keeps reverse-pivots and slices at bay. David actually increases his knee flex as he starts down (frame 8). "Squatting" like this—a move made famous by Sam Snead and copied with great success by a young Tiger Woods—might just be the best-kept secret to more power. Squatting promotes a proper weight shift and hip turn, leading to more clubhead speed. Critics call Lingmerth's backswing too flat, but a little flatness isn't bad—and it can even help you if you tend to slice.

DIGITAL BONUS



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EVERY SHOT COUNTS

BY MARK BROADIE



Follow Mark Broadie on Twitter @MarkBroadie

A Smash Hit

A red-hot driver has always been money on Tour, but in 2015 the big hitters bombed their way to a lot more cash



» SHOW ME the money on the PGA Tour, and I'll show you a master blaster. As I've mentioned before in this column, driving is for show and for dough. Quantified in a simple way, the players who made the most loot per event in the 2015 season (through the Deutsche Bank Championship, in early September) gained the most strokes not from their short game or putting but from their driving.

Here are the Tour's top five in dollars-per-event earned, in order: Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy, Jason Day, Bubba Watson and Henrik Stenson. On average, each banked a cool \$394,000 every time he teed it up in 2015. Through the Deutsche Bank, they combined to gain 36 percent of their strokes with the driver, 35 percent on approach shots, 16 percent on the greens, and 13 percent in the short game.

Effectively, the bombers play a course that's 165 yards shorter than the one testing the rest of the Tour field.

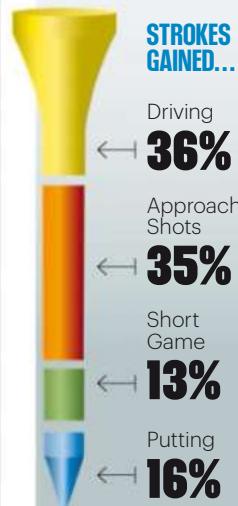
Of course, good driving alone—whether that means hitting it longer, splitting more fairways, or both—isn't enough to cash a big check. Except for Rory and his newly shaky putting, not one of these players lost strokes to the field in any of the four major shot categories. Yet as a group, they've bombed their drives 12 yards longer than the Tour average, while hitting slightly more fairways per round. Effectively, they're playing a course that's about 165 yards shorter than the one testing the rest of the field.

In the dozen years since the Tour began to collect ShotLink data, driving has never been a bigger contributor to the scoring of the top five leaders in per-event earnings. Conversely, the top five leaders in Strokes Gained driving (Watson, McIlroy, Dustin Johnson, Day and Charl Schwartzel) tripled the earnings per event of the top five in Strokes Gained putting.

Figures for all years (2003–15) reveal that approach shots make the biggest difference when the analysis broadens to include the top 40 leaders in money per event—and to be clear, that goes for this year, too. Still, our attention often turns to the crème de la crème, and in 2015 those players come from the ranks of the bombers, not the finesse players.

NUMBERS GAME 2015

How the top five in earnings per event gained strokes on Tour:



How much the top five in Strokes Gained in each category earned per event on Tour:



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HOT TRACKS

BY JOE PASSOV



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Birdies of Prey

Hunt for low scores on the Raptor, a desert destination worth playing

Grayhawk
Golf Club (Raptor)

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ.

7,082 YARDS, PAR 72

ARCHITECT: TOM FAZIO, 1995

\$60 - \$235, GRAYHAWKGOLF.COM



The par-3 eighth
is called "Aces
and Eights." (Joe's
score is typically
closer to the latter.)



CUP O' JOE

» WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Grayhawk was Phil Mickelson's hangout during the late 1990s, and he still sports the club logo on his bag. You can down goldfish bowl-size margaritas at Phil's Grill, which is filled with Mickelson memorabilia. The club is also home to the Kostis-McCord Learning Center. Formerly the venue for the PGA Tour's Frys.com Open, Raptor reopened in October with three new holes that displaced their predecessors to accommodate development. The reachable par-4

15th becomes a big two-shotter in the 450 range. The 16th also changes direction and goes from a long par 3 to a short one, while 17 becomes a drivable par 4. Tom Fazio did the work, ensuring consistency from old to new. Par the final four and your post-round margarita is on me.

» MY FAVORITE HOLE

The 521-yard 18th plays as a great risk/reward par 5 for Joe Sixpack and a stern par 4 for the pros. Fun fact: I got hitched on No. 18 in 2001. ("I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the golf widow.")

REMEMBERING MORRISH

Earlier this year, golf lost a great architect. **Jay Morrish** was best known for his 15-year collaboration with Tom Weiskopf. Morrish, 78 when he died, wasn't quite a household name in the world of golf. He should have been. "Jay knows more about design than the rest of us combined," Pete Dye once told me. His co-creations with Weiskopf—from Scotland's Loch Lomond to Ohio's Double Eagle to Arizona's Troon North—were his legacy. To experience a stellar Morrish solo work, play The Boulders in Carefree, Ariz. He integrates cleverly designed holes hewn from a thrilling canyon setting. It's the most dramatic use of ancient rocks this side of Stonehenge. Jay, you will be missed.

COURSE WITH NO NAME

Rio's Olympics track still has no moniker. Why? Its architect, **Gil Hanse**, filled me in. "Anything with the word 'Olympic' in it needs IOC approval for trademark purposes," he said.

SHACK TO THE SYSTEM

Let's do away with palatial halfway houses. They slow down play, and the grub's too pricy. **Sunningdale's** in England does the snack-shack right: two tables, some benches, a sausage sandwich with kick, and plenty of liquid refreshments on offer. Five minutes and you're back on the tee.

LONNA TUCKER/TRAVELIN' JOE ANGUS MURRAY

FOR PETE'S SAKE

BY PETER KOSTIS



GOLF magazine Top 100
Teacher & CBS Sports Analyst

A Big To-Do

Here's your checklist for lower scores, based on three lessons the 2015 season taught me

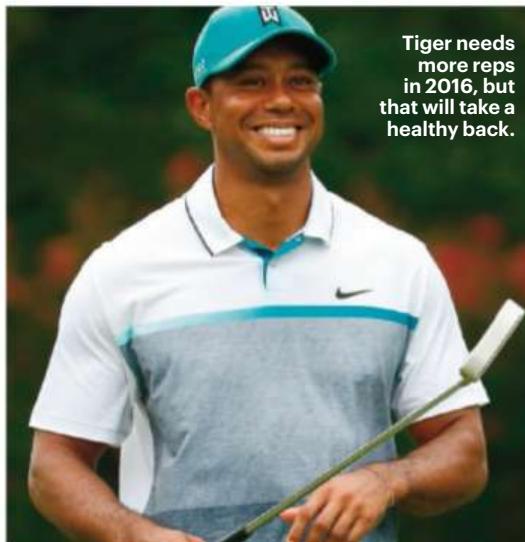
THIS PAST YEAR was full of exciting developments that will be hard to top, like the emergence of Jordan Spieth and Jason Day as major winners to challenge Rory McIlroy atop the World Ranking. I looked back on a heckuva good season and came up with three things you can do to play better.

» TRACK THE RIGHT STATS

While the use of statistics as a "Tour tool" has become more prevalent than ever, be cautious when applying them to your own game. The pros have access to an endless collection of numbers, which they use to analyze their strengths and weaknesses as well as develop on-course strategies. Beware, however, of trying to adjust your style of play just because the statistics say so. There are only five stats you should pay attention to: percentage of tee shots that you hit in play that leave you a reasonable shot to the green; the percentage of greens you hit (consider it a green hit if you're able to use your putter); your percentage of up-and-downs from 25 yards and in; your total number of putts and three-putts; and your penalty strokes. Those numbers will underscore your weaknesses, which you can then work to improve or even avoid. For example, if your putting is good but your chipping isn't, lay up to lob-wedge distance, get on the green and let your putter do the work.

» DON'T BE A COPYCAT

The most compelling aspect of Jordan, Rory and Jason's emergence—and I'll throw Rickie Fowler in there, too—is that they aren't copying anybody else. Not Hogan, Nicklaus or Woods. Each player's game is unique to him. Jordan hasn't revamped his swing to hit it 20 yards farther. Rory hasn't cut back on driver distance to get more accurate off the tee. The top young players know their strengths and weaknesses, and they show that you can work to improve your swing without abandoning your natural tendencies. I wish I had a buck for



Tiger needs more reps in 2016, but that will take a healthy back.

I wish I had a buck for every golfer who tried to copy someone else's swing. You almost always get worse.

» PLAY MORE TO PLAY BETTER

Tiger Woods showed moments of brilliance in 2015—a few greenside shots he hit at Augusta were vintage Tiger—but he needs more consistency. That means he needs to play more, advice any of us could take. However, his announcement in September of a second back surgery all but eliminates our chances of seeing Tiger early in 2015-16. We'll have to wait until Torrey Pines in January (at the earliest) for his return—and more questions about his body. Assuming he fully recovers, he needs a go-to shot under pressure in order to find the winner's circle again. Until then, the state of Tiger's game will depend on the state of his back. As Yogi Berra said, "It's déjà vu all over again." Here's hoping he gets healthy and finds his form. That would make next season a sweet '16!



Hey Peter!
My 8-year-old son is getting into golf. His grip is awful, but he hits the ball well. When is the right time to teach him a proper grip?
—Dexter Thompson, Flagstaff, Ariz.

Don't wait, Dexter. It's very important for your child to get some semblance of a proper grip as soon as possible. You don't want to risk injury, like strains and possible ligament damage in the hand and wrist. A poor grip makes your son susceptible, and that can set him up for a lifetime of golf distress. That said, I don't think you should be the one to initiate the change—modifying a grip can be tricky business. Your local PGA pro is better suited to help. Your son will regrip it and rip it—with technical precision—in very little time.

Do you have a question for Peter? Tweet him @peterjkostis or visit his website at peterkostis.com.

GO LOW

BY DAVE PELZ

Follow Dave Pelz on
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For 20- to 40-yard bunker blasts, hit chunks using a less-lofted club.

» **MOST GOLFERS**

consider the 20- to 40-yard greenside bunker shot the game's most difficult. This situation can have you penciling in a double-bogey in no time. Why are these shots so hard? Because you must be incredibly precise, striking the sand right next to the ball instead of a couple of inches behind it, as you would with a shorter bunker shot. This closer-to-the-ball contact creates an explosion strong enough to propel your ball all the way to

One Fine Miss

Chunk it—on purpose!—to knock long bunker shots close. Here's how.

Try a safe, easy shot, one that you already have down pat. Hit it fat! The chunk-and-run lets you get the ball all the way to the hole—and it's pressure-proof.

the pin. Just one problem: At impact, your margin for error is tiny. If you hit too far behind the ball with a sand wedge, you won't create enough energy to go the distance. And if you make contact with the ball first...well, good-bye, Mr. Spalding.

The good news is that in shallower hazards, you have options. Try a safer, easier technique, a shot you already have down pat. Hit it fat! The chunk-and-run is popular on Tour, because it's a much less dangerous way to make the ball travel long distances from sand. Take a less-lofted club and "chunk" the shot, hitting several inches behind the ball. This deadens impact and creates less backspin, which in turn lets your ball run all the way to the pin once it hits the green. Oh, and your margin for error at contact is now huge, which makes this a pressure-proof play.

Here are the key steps:

1. ADJUST YOUR SETUP

Grab your 8- or 9-iron and settle into your normal bunker address. Barely open the face—just enough to keep the clubhead from digging into the sand (but not so much that it can slide under the ball).

2. MISS BIG

Make your backswing about half as long as normal. As you swing down, aim for a spot a good four or five inches behind the ball. Your goal: Chunk the shot on purpose.

3. PUSH IT

Don't slide the club under the ball as you do in your regular technique. Instead, use the club to "push" the sand toward the target, so that the ball exits the bunker ahead of the club. For a 20-yard chunk, stop your follow-through when your hands reach waist height. For a 40-yard, swing to full finish.

4. WATCH IT RUN

Because your impact point is so far behind the ball, there's not enough friction to create more than just a smidgen of backspin. If you do it correctly, the ball will hit and then run like a scared rabbit across the green and close to the hole. Experiment a little. Try it with a 7-iron. With some practice, you'll be chunking your way to a new best score.

**THE PELZ VAULT**

» Dozens of short-game and putting video lessons at GOLF.com/pelz

» See a list of upcoming 3- and 2-day schools and 1-day clinics at pelzgolf.com.

All Dressed Up

Ah, Halloween—that spooktacular holiday when Tour pros trade in their FootJoys for Freddy masks. We scared up some costume suggestions for the game's biggest names.



PHIL MICKELSON
Evel Knievel



ZACH JOHNSON
American Gothic



FLUFF COWAN
The Lorax



JORDAN SPIETH
An Angel



STEVE WILLIAMS
Stormtrooper



DAVIS LOVE III
Captain America



TIGER WOODS
The Invisible Man



JOHN DALY
John Daly

SHOW-OFF SHOTS

DRIVER OFF THE DECK

Degree of difficulty:



When it's useful: On shots exceeding 250 yards—or, let's be honest, for regaining some credibility in your foursome after you've topped a drive as far as the red tees.

How to hit it: "This shot isn't crazy-difficult, but it should be used sparingly," says Top 100 Teacher **Brady Riggs**. "Only attempt it from a flat fairway lie and when the green is unguarded in front." If you have those conditions, Riggs says, let 'er rip. Here's how.

1. Relax. Tension in the arms and hands is bad for any shot, but it's a killer for this one. Before you step in, shake out any tightness. Swinging with relaxed arms and hands increases clubhead speed and helps your swing bottom out at the ball, two keys for executing this shot.



2. Aim left. The long shaft and low loft promotes a left-to-right shot, so adjust for the fade: Aim left and play the ball off your left heel.



3. Strike down. Ignore your desire to make an ascending strike on the ball, as you would if you had it teed up. You want your driver to descend into impact, so let your arms swing more "up" or vertically in your backswing, which will help you hit down on the ball. No need to pick it cleanly—it's okay to take some turf.



COSTUMES: DARRON ZEUS; GETTY IMAGES; INSTRUCTION ILLUSTRATIONS: BEN MUNROSEY



» Two wild turkeys at King's Forest G.C. in Hamilton, Ontario, have been terrorizing golfers and accosting staff vehicles. According to the *Hamilton Spectator*, locals have dubbed the beastly birds "teenage mutant ninja turkeys."



A ROUND WITH...

JESSICA MARKSBURY

Follow Jessica Marksberry on
Twitter @Jess_Marksberry

Troy Merritt

In a “spirited” chat, the rising Tour star, 30, talks whisky, winning and the real reason he loves golf

» Wow, Crown Royal & 7 is a serious drink! You’re kicking off our new 19th hole Q&A with the right attitude. Do you try to avoid drinking during tournament week?

It depends on how much you drink. I don’t have any issues having a glass with dinner.

» Ever go overboard?

My first time at Q-School, just outside Reno, we got back early enough [after the first round] to play some blackjack, and we just kept playing—for about eight hours. I had more than enough to drink that night, and I was hung-over the next morning. But I went out and shot 65 and made it to the second stage of Q-School.

» That’s pretty old-school of you.

I’m older and smarter now.

» You missed five straight cuts before you won the Quicken Loans in August...

That’s the name of the game. [Laughs]

» How do you explain winning after all those rough weeks?

I didn’t play poorly over those five missed cuts. I was just stuck in neutral. My best finish in my rookie



"I missed five cuts. I didn't play poorly—I was just in neutral. But one win can change everything."

year [2010] was third place in New Orleans, and that was after seven straight missed cuts. One week can change everything.

» How much has winning a Tour event—and becoming a millionaire overnight—changed you?

Absolutely zero.

» Come on!

Right before I left my house to go to the airport for the

Memorial, I dropped my phone and smashed the screen. It's still smashed.

» So you're frugal. Where does that come from?

I grew up in small-town Idaho. My parents were schoolteachers. We didn't have a whole lot, but they did whatever they could to allow my brothers and me to participate in what we wanted to. It was just a good, humble upbringing.

WHAT'S ON NOW AT GOLF.com



MUCH MORE WITH TROY

One for the road? Raise a glass with Jessica and Troy and watch a video of the full, exclusive interview—available only at GOLF.com/roundwith



TOUR CONFIDENTIAL

Jessica leads GOLF and Sports Illustrated writers in a lively discussion of the game's biggest stories, every Monday at GOLF.com/tourconfidential

» Your career has been full of ups and downs. How do you deal with the stress of the down times?

You just don't ever give up. That's the thing with this game: Anything can happen. It's not even day to day or week to week—it can be shot to shot. You can be going so well, hit a poor shot, and then forget how to play golf for the next month. It's a very funny game. It's frustrating. It's stupid. And I love it. ☀

GOLF

FROM THE EDITORS OF GOLF COMES
YOUR ALL-NEW DAILY DESTINATION FOR

GOLF'S COOL AND QUIRKY

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TRICK SHOTS AND HOT SPOTS

SOCIAL MEDIA GAFFES AND GOTCHAS

PLUS THE BEAUTIES OF THE GAME

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Performance

CENTER

EDITED BY DAVID DeNUNZIO

Powered by the Top 100 Teachers in America



LOB IT HIGH AND SOFT!

HAPPY LANDINGS

It takes a soft touch to save strokes around the greens, and no shot is softer—or more fun to pull off—than the flop. Think you can't pull one off? Think again. Today's 60-degree wedges make it easy to loft extra-high pitches, although your sand wedge will work fine, too. And this is more than a show-off shot. It's an essential stroke-saver that lets you stick it tight when you have little green to work with or when an obstacle stands between you and the pin. So turn the page, try our three simple steps—and start to channel your inner Phil.

Photography by JAMES WESTMAN

GERONIMO!
Your mission:
sky-high
pitches
that land
safe, sound
and close.

37

Proven Ways to
Shoot Your Best
Score Ever!



LOB IT CLOSE EVERY TIME

Hitting flop shots like Lefty is as easy as 1, 2, 3!

LOB IT HIGH AND SOFT!

For fun, Google "Mickelson flop shot Scottish Open." You'll find a video of Lefty in a collection area on the par-4 third at Castle Stuart in 2013. A grass bunker blocks his path to the green. The pin is cut tight to the apron. Beyond: the Moray Firth. Phil takes a full, fearless swing, and in seeming defiance of physics, the ball pops straight up, lands softly and settles a couple of feet from the cup. Wow.

Guess what: You can hit the same shot using an easy-to-copy three-step technique. The main thing is to get comfortable with using a wide-open clubface. Once you set the face open in Step 1, make continuous practice swings, "thumping" the ground with the sole of your wedge. If the leading edge ever digs, you're closing the face and deloading the club. Hint: Use more arms than wrists. If you get the "thump" down, the ball will fly high and drop like a feather.

1

AIM LEFT OF YOUR TARGET

Take a wide stance (feet outside your shoulders), with your toe line running a few yards left of your target. Position the ball in the center and set your hands off your zipper. Next, rotate the grip in your hands until the grooves on the face point toward the toes of your left foot. The face is now set for "flop."



2

KEEP YOUR ARMS STRAIGHT

This swing is more of a "picking" rather than a "digging" motion. The arc the clubhead traces through impact is a "U" shape. To make that arc, keep your arms "long" and loose. There's no need to actively hinge your wrist. Just let it happen.

OPEN

Rotate the face open until the grooves point toward the toes of your left foot.



LONG

Keep your arms loose but straight. This creates a sweeping impact and maximum shot loft.

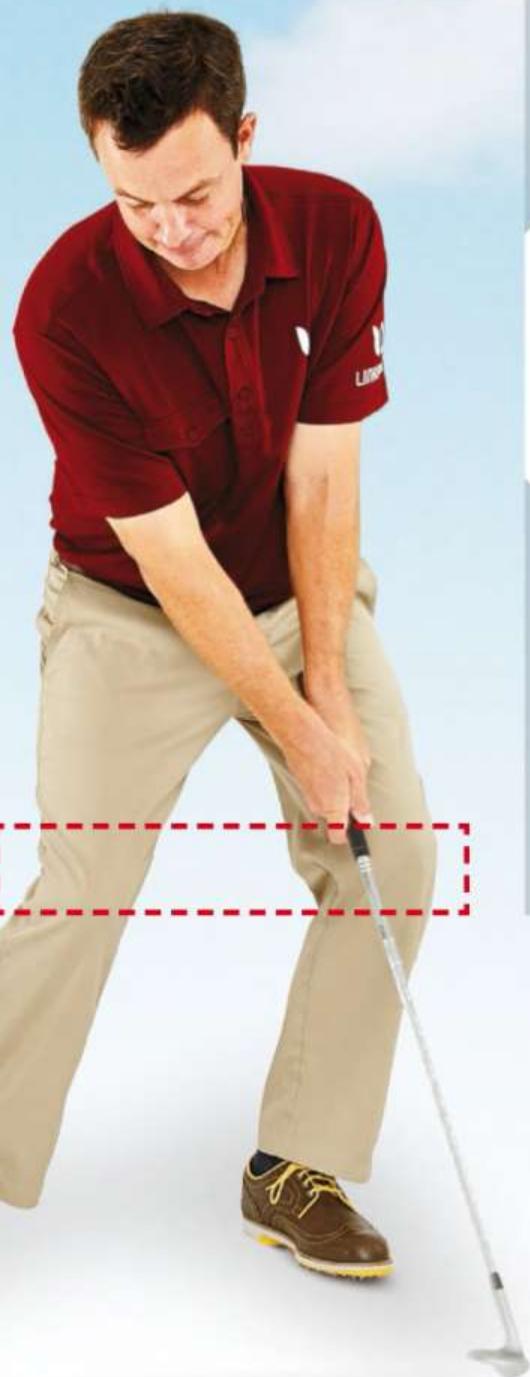
3

LEVEL OUT YOUR KNEES

Using your regular full wedge-swing motion, swing along the direction of your toe line, not where the grooves or leading edge are pointing. As you approach impact, drive your knees toward the target while keeping them level. Use the momentum of the clubhead, not your hands, to knock the ball into the air.

LEVEL

Drive your knees toward the target, keeping them level the whole way. This helps you "thump" the sole against the turf.



HOME SCHOOL

GROOVE A PERFECT LOB—IN YOUR PJS!

Don't wait until your next round or practice session to perfect your new lob swing. Hone it in your living room. Set up as you did in step No. 1, then start back. Stop your backswing



when your hands reach hip height, then check the clubface. If it points toward the ceiling, you nailed a key element of the flop. Congrats. Now go ahead and get back to that *Three's Company* rerun.

ILLUSTRATION: BEN MOUNCEY

1**FEET****CROSS THEM AT THE START**

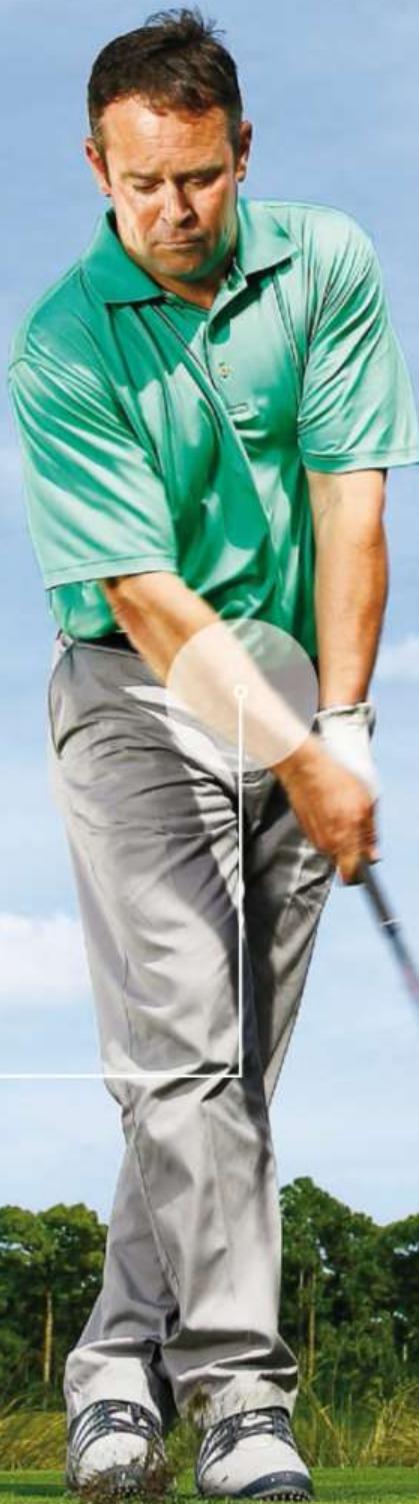
At address, cross your right foot over your left as shown. Position the ball between your two feet. Once you feel balanced, start your backswing.

2**HIPS****FEEL THE RESTRICTION**

The cross-footed stance will limit your ability to turn your hips as you swing to the top. That's good. Less hip turn equals more coil and energy. And if you're prone to swaying, the funky stance will keep you from doing that, too, or else you'll lose your balance.

3**ARMS****MAKE THEM POWER YOUR SWING**

If you spin your hips too fast from the top, you'll fall over. Instead, let your arms—the engine of your swing—bring the club back to the ball. Once you can catch these shots cleanly, transfer the "fast-arm" feeling to your regular swing.

**30-SECOND FIX****HIT BALLS CROSS-FOOTED**

My drill activates your arms and adds speed to your iron swing

» Your arms cover more swing distance than any other body part. To stripe the ball, you'd better move them—fast. Also, they're easier to work with than, say, your hips and legs, which can ruin your swing path (hello, slice!) if you mess with them too much. Here's a drill to amp up your swing speed in 30 seconds flat.

ANGUS MURRAY

Pitch It Close

This stance works wonders for your wedges, too. Crossing your right foot over your left keeps your weight to your left, the secret to pure short-game strikes.



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STINGING RAIN,
COOL TEMPS,
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EVERYONE.**



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DryJoys Select sets a new standard in golf rainwear. An exclusively engineered performance fabric provides maximum waterproof protection and breathability in an extremely lightweight construction. This versatile rain suit is the most innovative offering to date from the #1 Outerwear Brand In Golf. Enhanced with 4-way stretch fabric, premium trims and the exclusive StaDry® Collar, DryJoys Select is the ultimate shell in the FJ Layering System.

MAKE EVERY DAY PLAYABLE

START SMART!

Stop slices with a Tour takeaway

THE PROBLEM

You're spraying your irons. Blame your takeaway, which can make or break your swing. My guess? You're getting off to a bad start either by closing or opening the face, or by yanking the club above or below plane.

THE FIX

Do what many of my PGA Tour students do and practice your takeaway with a cross-handed grip (right). With your left hand low, it's much easier to push the club straight back without rotating the face open or closed. And with your right hand high, your right elbow naturally folds against the right side of your torso, keeping the shaft on plane. Copy the positions at right. Good contact starts with a good takeaway.



Mark Blackburn
Greystone Golf & C.C., Birmingham, Ala.

Why Can't I Make a 20-Footer?

Find out with this self-test and be your own guru!

1 Is it my speed?

Good reads and solid contact don't matter if your pace isn't well-judged. You'll leave your first putt a long way from the hole, and three-jack often.

NO

HOW TO CHECK

Place a tee four feet in front of the hole and another tee four feet beyond it. Roll 10 putts of 20 feet. Your goal: Stop at least eight balls between the tees.

YES

FIX NO. 1

Roll putts to a target 20 feet away. Hit each ball a few inches past the previous putt. After 10 balls, work in reverse, hitting each putt a few inches shorter. That will help you hone your touch.

2 Is it my contact?

If you're not striking the ball in the center of the putterface, holing putts is just about impossible, whether it's from 20 feet or 20 inches.

NO

HOW TO CHECK

Using a Sharpie, draw a line around the ball's equator. Aim the line down your target line. If the line "wobbles" as the ball rolls, you missed the sweet spot.

YES

FIX NO. 2

For better impact, make a "gate" as shown. Roll putts until your putterhead can consistently pass through the gate without hitting a tee.



3 Am I expecting too much?

Maybe. On average, Tour players drain only 13 percent of their 20- to 25-foot putts. If you're already making 20-footers at a 10 percent clip, you're doing pretty well.

HOW TO CHECK

Start logging detailed putting data, just as you would fairways and greens hit. It's the only way to know if you're losing strokes on the green.

YES

FIX NO. 3

Lower your expectations. Your odds of draining a given 20-footer are low, so let go of the pressure. You'll feel looser and lighter. When tension fades away, it's much easier to start pouring 'em in.

GOLFER'S-EYE VIEW

Bunker Buster

Copy this to have a blast in the sand

» We try to see the game from your point of view—literally. Here's what a proper sand setup should look like through your eyes. A few minor tweaks to your address makes escaping the sand easy. Then simply swing and the ball will pop up and onto the green. These adjustments let you make a perfect pivot on autopilot. As long as the clubhead enters the sand behind the ball, you'll find the green every time.

GO FORWARD

Play the ball off the inside of your left thigh. This ensures that you'll strike the sand first and carve a shallow divot.

OPEN UP

Rotate the face a few degrees to the right (but not wide open). Lower your hands three inches. Dropping down on the handle squares the face and maintains ideal loft.

LINE IT UP

Set your hands so the shaft sits nearly up and down. If you re-create this arrangement at impact, the club will slide instead of dig.

DIG IN

Work your left instep into the bunker, not your whole foot. This stabilizes your lower body. Sand swings are mostly arms; your legs should be fairly quiet.



HOW TO ATTACK A LONG PAR 3

Do you feel lucky, punk?

» Probably not. These are scary tee shots, after all. Even pros leave their approach shots from 175 to 200 yards an average of 33 feet from the hole—not as close as you might have thought. Whether you favor a conservative approach or you like a little risk, here are three ways to play a long par 3.

2

GO FOR IT!

BUT TAKE AN EXTRA CLUB

If you're the pin-hunting type, play the full yardage to the pin, plus an extra 10. You'll make a smoother swing, since you have plenty of club. Make several "rehearsal" swings, then pull the trigger, accelerating through impact with *full* commitment. Hey, no matter what, you'll be the bravest guy in your group.

—Brian Manzella

3

BE AGGRESSIVE, BUT SMART

AIM FOR THE GREEN, NOT THE FLAG

Divide the green into four quadrants and aim for the one that's farthest from danger—in this case, the right-front quadrant. Ignore the flag! You won't be a hero, but you'll have a two-putt par while your playing partners are reaching for their ball retrievers.

—Bernie Najar

1

BAIL OUT, BRO... YOU STILL HAVE A GREAT CHANCE AT PAR

Long irons are hard to hit perfectly, so use your trusty 7-iron and lay up. Lock in on a landing zone that gives you a clear view of the pin for your second shot and that lets you play a simple pitch. Bogey is now the worst you can do, and you might just make par.

—Fred Griffin



LEFT: GRAHAM GACHES; OPPOSITE: GETTY IMAGES

51

The percentage of our Top 100 Teachers who advise bailing out on long par 3s. Forty-four percent favor targeting the fat of the green, while just 5 percent say, "Flag hunt!"

TARGET PRACTICE

At address, focus on a single dimple to prepare yourself for a perfect hit.

**SWING THOUGHT**

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL

Make that a single dimple—and hit it pure instantly

They say that when Hall of Famer Greg Maddux pitched, he didn't aim at the catcher's mitt—he aimed at a dime that he imagined was resting in his teammate's glove. This visual created a pinpoint focus that cleared his mind of other distractions. And because his target was so precise, when Maddux missed the dime, he'd still hit the mitt. This kind of focus is probably missing from your golf game. The next time you're on the tee, dial in like a laser beam on a *single* dimple on the ball. Stay locked in from setup through impact: See the dot and hit it with the center of the clubface. You'll clear your mind of tension-creating thoughts, and if you miss the dimple, your newfound precision will still ensure a solid hit—or rather, a solid "stee-rike!"

Brian Mogg Waldorf Astoria G.C., Orlando, Fla.

At the PGA Championship, nobody hit his short irons closer than Martin Kaymer. Here's how to rattle a lot more pins.

1 'UNDER' PERFORM

Like any elite golfer, Kaymer turns his shoulders at right angles to his spine. And since his spine is angled toward the ground, his shoulders work under his body, not around it. This will stop you from hitting pulls and keep the clubface squarer longer through impact for ultra-straight shots.



Martin Kaymer **Stick Your Irons**

By Bill Moretti, Austin G.C., Austin, Texas

2

ARM YOURSELF

Lee Trevino thought of his torso as a tree trunk and his arms as its branches. This visual helped him keep his arms and body in sync, letting his club return to the perfect impact position. Kaymer is a great "arms-in-front" player, too. Try it yourself. Make half-swings with the butt of your driver tucked into your belly—you'll instantly feel the arm-body connection.

3

MAKE AN IMPACT

See how the grip on Kaymer's iron points to his left thigh? This means that his hands are in line with the clubhead at impact. Less-skilled players often let the club pass the hands (so that the grip points to the right thigh) at impact. Your fix? Keep turning through impact.

5'10"

Kaymer's proximity to the hole from 75 to 100 yards at the 2015 PGA Championship tops in the field.



4

FEET OF GREATNESS

Kaymer's flat-footed impact position is one of his most powerful swing secrets. "Grounded" feet allow both hips to continue turning past impact (a great anti-push/anti-slice move) while helping you maintain your posture. Try rolling your ankles rather than "pushing" off the ground. You'll be a GIR machine.

Photograph by RICHARD HEATHCOTE/GETTY IMAGES

Scan This Photo

To watch a video
of this lesson,
see p.11.

A POWER PLAY

RAMP UP YOUR SWING

Literally use this magazine for 20 extra yards

» A descending attack angle on your driver swing may be costing you big-time yards. Trackman estimates that this mistake cuts your power by about 10 percent, even when you hit the sweet spot.

ANGLE OF ATTACK	-5°	+5°
SPIN	3,687 rpm	2,607 rpm
CARRY DISTANCE	206 yds.	230 yds.
TOTAL DISTANCE	240 yds.	265 yds.

This data is taken from a 95 mph swing. Similar distance discrepancies go for slower- and faster-swinging golfers. The rub? Hitting down on the ball is a tee-box killer. To groove a powerful uppercut, try the following drill:

STEP 1 Tee up a ball as you normally would. Place a copy of GOLF on top of a second ball placed an inch behind the tee, creating a "ramp" as shown.

STEP 2 Take a few rips at three-quarter speed. Your goal: Hit the ball without hitting the magazine.

STEP 3 Gradually increase the speed of the clubhead until you reach full-throttle, gliding up the "ramp" each time. Once you have a feeling for this ascending swing, try it without the magazine. Boom! Say hello to 20 extra yards.

Tom Stickney The Vidanta Golf Academies, vidanta.com

SMART PLAY

JAMES SIECKMANN



KNOCK YOUR 'BLOCK' OFF!

» The first step when learning a swing change? Repeat it in a focused environment until you get it right. (The drill above is a good example.) This is known as "block" practice, and it's ideal for ingraining unfamiliar motor programs. But since you rarely hit the same shot back-to-back when you play, block practice can be a roadblock—one that stops you from bringing your new move to the course. So when you're able in practice to perform a new move

with little thought, switch to "random" mode. Alternate your club, shot, target or lie on every swing. (For example, go from a driver to a 7-iron to a half wedge). This helps you visualize and pull off shots on the course. My PGA Tour students spend 90 percent of their range time in "random" mode, using block drills only to confirm their ability to execute a given skill. Use the 90-10 ratio to make new moves stick—and to score when it counts.

jsegolfacademy.com

Don't let "block" practice make you a blockhead.

FACE: THE FACTS

Make this adjustment for a higher launch and longer drives

» Heads up, power faders: Changing the face angle on your adjustable driver won't help you reel in your banana ball or tone down a hook. According to TaylorMade chief technical officer Benoit Vincent, there are too many variables in the way most players deliver the clubface to the ball to make face adjustment a reliable source for correcting shot shape. So is adjustability a gimmick? "Hardly," Vincent says. "Changing the face angle significantly affects launch angle and spin, which in turn affects distance."

This means you can add yards by hitting the ball higher or lower, without a swing overhaul. Yet simply adjusting the face to a more open position is no guarantee of a higher launch. "It's the opposite of what happens with your irons," Vincent says. "Due to some complicated physics, if you want a higher launch, switch to a more closed setting. Do the opposite if you want a lower trajectory." And don't be shy. Vincent advises at least two degrees of adjustment in either direction. "Otherwise, you won't get the change you're looking for." —MICHAEL CHWASKY



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ADDICTION IS HOPELESS WITHOUT YOU

Share your story of recovery or message of hope with someone who needs to hear it. Visit drugfree.org and join the "Stories of Hope" community.

STEP ON THE GAS

Lift your left foot in practice. *Crush* it in play.

» For longer drives, use one of the best power moves in the game: **Shift your weight to your right leg and hip** as you swing to the top. This creates pressure under the instep of your right foot, without which you don't have a push-off point for your downswing—you're like a baseball pitcher trying to throw a fastball while standing flat-footed. Armed with this pressure, you can transfer your weight and swing energy back to your left side for explosive impact. This subtle move is critical for maximum swing speed. Master it in three steps using this drill.

LIFT OFF

Raise your left heel on the range. You'll drive it a lot farther on the first tee.

Jerry King Makena Golf & Beach Club, Wailea-Makena, Hawaii

1 Address the ball normally and begin your backswing. Just before you reach the top, raise your left foot off the ground.

2 Try to transition to your right side as smoothly as possible. It's actually easy with most of your weight over your right foot.

3 Plant your left foot to start down. This automatically shifts your weight to the left, boosting speed and power.



To watch a video of this lesson, see p. 11.

SUCCESS STORY

38%

THAT'S THE AMOUNT THIS READER SLASHED HIS HANDICAP IN ONE SEASON. HERE'S HOW.

» Columbia, Md., businessman J.P. Grant, 61, was a lifelong short-hitter. Now? "I can drive it to where I have a lot of short irons into the greens, which has made the game easier," he says. So easy, in fact, that Grant's handicap has dropped from 13 to 8 in a little over a year, and he shot three rounds in the 70s last summer. "My swing coach, **Top 100 Teacher Bernie Najar** [Caves Valley, Owings Mills, Md.], had me widen my backswing by working with an elastic band (below). By learning the feeling of 'width' in this drill, my power has skyrocketed."



An elastic band (blue) can help you turn your weak swing arc into a power move.

A man in a light blue shirt and dark trousers is sleeping on his side in a bed. A white speech bubble with a black border and a thin white outline contains the text.

Sleep sideways.
**It's good not
to be home.**

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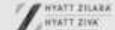
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4 EASY PIECES

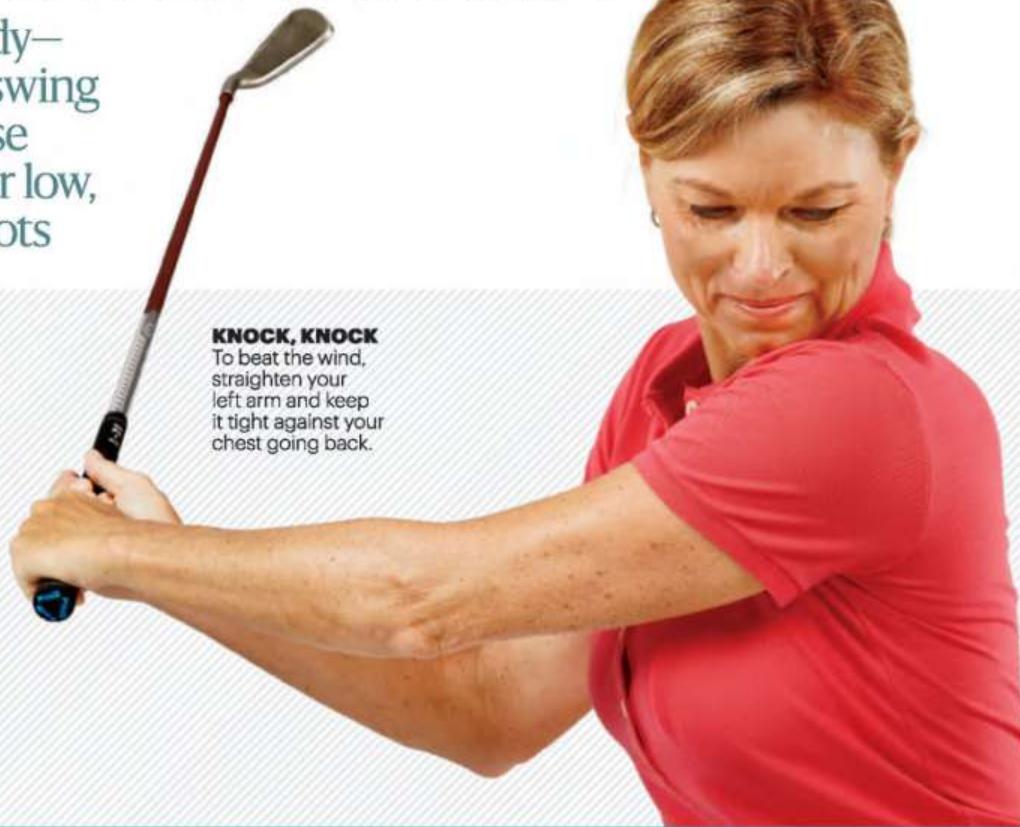
THE LOWDOWN ON KNOCKDOWNS

When it's windy—or when your swing goes south—use these 4 keys for low, flag-finding shots

1

Your key move? Stop your backswing when your left arm reaches parallel to the ground. To make this happen naturally, set more weight over your left side and pull your left foot back a few inches at address. Pulling your left foot back also squares up your shoulders and keeps your weight forward through impact.

KNOCK, KNOCK
To beat the wind, straighten your left arm and keep it tight against your chest going back.



2

Grip down a few inches for extra control. Because you're "shortening" the club, take one more (a 7-iron if you're at your 8-iron distance). The ball will launch lower but run out like crazy.



3

Play the ball an inch behind its normal position and set your hands in line with your left thigh, so that the shaft leans forward. This deloops the club for a piercing trajectory.



4

Match your finish to your backswing, with your body facing the target. This smooths out your tempo. But don't slow down your arms! That only adds loft, and your shots will fall short.

REIGN WHEN IT POURS

Here's the secret to crisp contact in soggy conditions

Hitting off wet ground is a lot like hitting from a fairway bunker: You're standing on a soft surface, so you have to adjust in order to make solid, ball-first contact. Here's how to get set when it's wet.

Grip Down Your feet will sink into the ground a bit, lowering your swing arc. To offset this, grip down on the handle a half-inch. This will help you pick the ball off the soggy turf.

Hover the Club Stand taller and a few inches closer to the ball so that you can comfortably hover the club above the ground. Line up the leading edge with the ball's equator.

Hit a Spot Focus on a spot on the ground one inch in front (i.e., on the target side) of the ball. As you approach impact, try to power the club through the ball and over your spot. You'll make contact with the ball first, negating interference by the wet ground. Try this swing thought: Feel as though your right knee and the club are reaching the ball at the same time.

Jason Carbone Baltusrol G.C., Springfield, N.J.

UP AND EAT 'EM

Carbs are for closers! Fuel up with these pre-round power foods and finish like a pro.



JOHNSON WAGNER

MY PRE-ROUND MEAL:
"Roast beef sandwich."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "This meal could pack more carbs and better protein sources," says Amy Goodson, sports dietitian for Ben Hogan Sports Medicine. "Add a salad with fruit, nuts and avocado to keep from hitting a wall on the back nine."

RATING **PAR**



GARY WOODLAND

MY PRE-ROUND MEAL:
"Eggs when I wake up, and a smoothie just prior to tee time."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "No matter how you prepare them, eggs are chock-full of protein, making this a good, lean breakfast," Goodson says. "Paired with whole-grain toast or oatmeal, it's perfect, especially if you're a power-hitter like Woodland."

RATING **BIRDIE**



SCOTT PINCKNEY

MY PRE-ROUND MEAL:
"Chicken, mashed potatoes and fruit."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "The lean protein (chicken) and carbs (potatoes) stabilize your blood sugar, ensuring focus," Goodson says. "Adding fruit is key. Fruits supply carbs for energy and electrolytes for hydration."

RATING **BIRDIE**



SEUNG-YUL NOH

MY PRE-ROUND MEAL:
"Almond butter sandwich."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "The butter and whole-grain bread combo is great for blood sugar maintenance," she says. "But this meal needs more protein. Greek yogurt with fruit or a few ounces of low-fat cheese and some grapes would do the trick."

RATING **BOGEY**



BODY WORK

END YOUR SLUMP

Fix your posture and pile up more yards with this shoulder stretch

John Tattersall Fusion ATL, Atlanta, Ga.

All those hours toiling at your desk or driving in your car take a toll on your swing. Your natural sitting posture forces your head and shoulders forward, which can limit how far you're able to rotate or lift your arms.

TRY THIS: Press your palms flat against the sides of a doorjamb (photo, right). Lean your torso forward through the doorway, keeping your shoulders in line with your ears. Feel the bottoms of your shoulder blades pinch together. Hold for a few counts, and repeat three times, then stand at ease. With daily repetitions, you'll feel "taller" with your shoulders set in line with your hips, giving you better posture in a week. Take it to the tee, swing—and watch the ball get small.



ANGUS MURRAY (2)

GOOD MEDICINE

HOW TO PLAY WITH A BAD BACK

Three ways to keep a twinge from derailing your round

DON FARRALL/GETTY IMAGES; INSTRUCTION ILLUSTRATION: BEN MONSEY

A bad back is almost as certain as death and taxes. About 80 percent of men experience lower-back pain at some point, research shows. "The best way to keep your back from barking is to strengthen it in the gym twice every week," says Taryn Mast, a certified trainer in Carlsbad, Calif. If your back flares up on the course, follow this plan.

STEP 1 Rest a minute and assess your pain level. The spasm may pass.

STEP 2 Work out any kinks in your back (see below) by stretching your QL (quadratus lumborum, a lower-back muscle).

STEP 3 Get some ice from the snack shack or beverage cart and apply it to the area for 10 minutes. No ice? Run cold water over a towel, wring it out and use it as a compress.

QL STRETCH

Stand next to your cart, facing forward. Cross your right foot over your left, then grab the roof of the cart with both hands without turning your chest. Extend your right hip away from the cart, as shown.



Hold for a few counts, then face the opposite direction and repeat, this time with your left foot crossed over your right. No pain? Play on. Still feeling a twinge? Consider calling it a day.

—SETH KELLY

JASON DAY THE fighter

If he made his living in the ring, we'd call him Sweetness—and he'd *still* be badder than the rest. To finally hoist a major trophy, as he did at this year's PGA, Jason Day fought fierce battles, within and without, making his triumphant year all the more thrilling. Turns out nice guys can finish first.

SPECIAL 3-PART STORY

Interview by Connell Barrett

Portraits by ANGUS MURRAY

GOLF



"I CAN GET USED TO WINNING MAJORS"

The secret to Day's success? Hard work. Patience. A supportive team. Oh, and 380-yard drives don't hurt. From the low of vertigo to the heights of major glory, here's Jason on Jason.

THE BEST SWING I MADE at Whistling Straits was my drive on [the par-5] 16th on Sunday. I led Jordan [Spieth] by three. I had to get it in the fairway, because I knew Jordan would birdie and get right back in it. I crushed it 325 down in the fairway. I was pumped for that second shot, a 4 iron from 230 yards. I hit a high, towering 4 iron to the green. Two-putt for birdie to keep that lead. That drive set everything up.

FEARFUL THOUGHTS POP IN. I don't care who you are—Tiger in his prime, Rory, Jordan, me. At one point Sunday at the PGA, I was thinking about what I'd say at the trophy presentation. And on 18, I'm thinking, "Don't hook it left." You just have to stamp those thoughts out and visualize the shot.



MY FAVORITE MOMENT with Jordan on Sunday was on 11. He hits a good drive, about 300 yards. Then I absolutely crush it 382 yards down the fairway. He gets up to [his shot] laughing his head off. He says to me, "Holy s---! Do you know where you hit your ball?" I just gave him a little bicep curl.

SOME PLAYERS DON'T LIKE STRESS. I do. It's something that you're born with, but that you also have to learn. I thrive under pressure. You have to love the fight. Hitting the big shot under major pressure is addictive. I can get used to hitting those big shots. I can get used to winning majors.



YOU HAVE TO TAKE RISKS AND BE OKAY WITH FAILURE. SOMETIMES YOU'LL WIN IN STYLE, AND SOMETIMES YOU'LL LOSE BIG. ACCEPTING EITHER RESULT GIVES YOU A SENSE OF CALM.

I'M ON THE 16TH TEE at the Masters in 2013. I have the lead, and I can't breathe. My muscles are tight, tense, like I've just worked out. In my mind, I'm slipping on the jacket, not hitting the shot I need to hit. The pressure builds and builds. I'm so pumped that I hit the ball 15 yards too far. I bogey 16 and 17 and finish third. I wasn't prepared for that pressure. The lesson? Stay present in the shot, the moment.

WITH VERTIGO, everything shakes, becomes blurry. You feel nauseous. At Chambers Bay on Friday, I was fine. No problems. Then on nine, my 18th hole, I turn to [my caddie] Col [Swatton], and he's a blur. I feel like I'm moving 100 miles per hour. I have to find the ground—I feel like I'm going to be thrown off the earth.

PARAMEDICS COME, but I have to finish. [My ball] is in a bunker, with a stone behind it. I can't reach down and remove it; my hand is shaking too much. An official grabs it for me. Everything—the green, the ball, my hands—is shaking. I don't know how I can swing. I just find a way.

Jordan is an extreme competitor. He loves the fight. And his sportsmanship is beyond anyone's. I didn't expect that thumbs up he gave me on 17. That says it all.

RIGHT: KEVIN C. COX/GETTY IMAGES



:: FIRST PERSON ::

THEY PUMP A LITER AND A HALF of liquid into me, and I get some medicine. The next day, Saturday, I feel terrible. I tell myself, "Okay, just 17 holes left... now 15 holes left... now seven." I shot 2-under. How? I don't know. [Laughs] Muscle memory, I guess. I wanted to quit, but it's the U.S. Open. It turns out that I can push myself further than I ever realized. And I took that with me to the British and the PGA.

WE DIDN'T HAVE MONEY growing up. I remember watching my mom cut the lawn with a knife because we couldn't afford to fix the mower. We didn't have a hot-water tank, so we had to use a kettle for hot showers. To think back on that, and to be sitting next to the Wanamaker Trophy, it's an incredible feeling.

I GET MY WORK ETHIC FROM MY MOM. I slack off now and then, but you find out fast in golf if you're not performing.

I HAVE THE MOST INCREDIBLE TEAM: Colin, Bud [Martin] my agent, and my wife, Ellie. They want me to be the best I can be. We have the same



BIGGEST NON-GOLF TALENT

I don't have any other talents. I'm not a jack-of-all-trades. I'm just really stinkin' good at golf. [Laughs] That's about it.

BRO CRUSH

I like Dwayne Johnson, the Rock. I used to watch WWE on TV in Australia, and I always rooted hard for him.

SUCCESS SECRET

Always play to win. It doesn't matter what it is: golf, shuffleboard, playing cards. You might beat me, but I'll do my very best to win.

ONE & DONE

If I could only win one tournament in 2016, I'd take the Masters. Watching Tiger win there in 1997 was what really got me going in golf.

MOVIE-STAR STRUCK

Who'd play me in *The Jason Day Story*? Good luck finding an Asian Aussie! Let's go with the Rock again: someone chiseled, a good-looking cat, like me. [Laughs]

goals: We all want us to get to World No. 1. I don't have yes-men. I have truthful people who tell me when I'm slacking. In 2012, they said to me, "You're not working hard enough." They were right. You can draw a line from that conversation to what I've done this year.

I GUARD AGAINST GETTING LAZY.

The moment I relax is when I start to go backwards.

I BECAME A DAD IN 2012. I wasn't totally prepared for parenting. It's hard, difficult work. At the start, you get less sleep than you ever thought possible. You walk around like a zombie. And Ellie was dealing with postpartum depression, so to play [good] golf on top of that was hard. It affected our relationship and my game, but it made us even closer.

DASH IS 3. Someday, when he's grown, I hope he'll say that his dad was a good man—that regardless of how much money he earned or how many tournaments he won, he treated people well. It's good to be nice and friendly. Everyone has a story. Everyone is interesting in their own unique way.

WHEN YOU KNOW in which direction your ball is going, golf is pretty fun—and it's been a lot of fun for me lately.

THERE'S SO MUCH YOUNG TALENT, with Rory, Rickie, Jordan. I guess I'm the old man of the group. [Laughs] But when I play my absolute best, no, I don't think anyone can beat me.

I'VE TAKEN SOME LEAPS of faith to get here. Sometimes when you leap, you have to do it with your eyes closed.

I'M BLESSED TO PLAY GOLF, to be here talking about the good times and the hard times. I worked my butt off to make it this far, to finally win that first major. But I've also been so fortunate.

I COULDN'T ASK FOR A BETTER LIFE.

DAYS OF HARDSHIP.
DAYS OF SACRIFICE.
DAYS OF STRUGGLE.
ALL MADE THIS DAY.



20
UNDER PAR.

IT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
PURSUIT TURNS INTO PERFECTION.
Congratulations to Jason Day for achieving the lowest score
ever in a major tournament.

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LEXUS
THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

JASON DAY

:: PROFILE ::

PART 2



**JASON'S BIGGEST
WEAKNESS WAS
DOUBT. "I DIDN'T
BELIEVE I WAS
ONE OF THE BEST."**

JASON'S GREATEST SAVE

After a turbulent upbringing, Jason Day's second family helped make him whole as he harnessed his staggering talent. Before he became the guy who could save par from anywhere, he first had to save himself.

By Cameron Morfit
Portraits by ANGUS MURRAY

So who do you play for? He thinks. Hard. "That's a *really* good question," says Jason Day, smiling. It's four days after the 27-year-old Aussie's PGA Championship victory, his first major win following years of great expectations—and near misses—in golf's biggest events. Day seems almost weightless, like someone freed of a tremendous burden.

"Last week I told my agent that no one was gonna beat me at the PGA because I didn't want to come to this cover shoot without the Wanamaker Trophy. I really said that. Because it would just look so much cooler to have the trophy. So sometimes I play for the media, sometimes for the fans, sometimes for my sponsors, and sometimes it's for my family. Really, I play for everyone."

We're at the Double Eagle Club, Day's home away from home just north of his digs in the suburbs of Columbus, Ohio. His wife, Ellie—due in November with the couple's second child—will arrive soon, along with Dash, their adorable 3-year-old son. Day is celebrating his sudden good fortune with Bud Martin, his longtime agent, a dozen or so magazine types, a tray of pastries, and that 27-pound silver trophy, which lives in a case that looks like it could withstand a nuclear blast. Day pries it open. "Who brought the Champagne?" someone asks. "Let's fill it up!"

Who wouldn't raise a glass to Jason Day? By all accounts, he's unimpeachably genuine; nice without agenda. "He makes me think of Arnie," says Golf Channel analyst Brandel Chamblee. "Or Jeter, Staubach, Arthur Ashe—great athletes and great sportsmen,

popular with the media and fellow athletes, magnanimous at every turn. That's Jason."

Professional sport doesn't breed a lot of nice guys. Day is that rarity: a sweetheart with killer instincts. Before the 2015 season, he'd displayed his grit and promise of greatness with a handful of victories on the European and PGA tours. In this, his breakout year, he's added five more trophies to that tally, and he electrified the golf world by winning four out of six starts, including the PGA at Whistling Straits. He also reached World No. 1 with his win at the BMW Championship, fulfilling his greatest childhood dream. (*Note: This issue went to press before the Tour Championship was played.*) Day is part of the newly anointed Big Three, alongside Jordan Spieth and Rory McIlroy. It's heady stuff.

"And unfortunately, I'm eating a donut in front of you," says Day, breaking into a sheepish grin. The famously disciplined, six-days-a-week gym rat is enjoying a "cheat" (glazed) from his rigorous diet-and-exercise regimen. If anyone deserves the reward of a little sugar, it's Day.

"People look at me funny when I say the thing that makes me proudest of Jason is that he's a great kid; a loving, doting fa-

ther to Dash; and a loving husband to Ellie," says his longtime caddie, coach and mentor, Colin Swatton. "Because they just don't know."

They know some, but not everything, about where Day comes from, and what he's gone through to find the light in a life with some dark passages. "It's good to be friendly, because everyone has a story," says a philosophical Day.

Well, there are stories—and then there's Jason Day's story.

HE GREW UP on a farm in Beaudesert, a rural town in Queensland dotted with abandoned factories. No one in his family played golf. In the mornings he ate ramen noodles, and he and his two sisters, Kimmy and Yanna, wore second-hand clothes. Their Irish Australian father, Alvin, tended to the cattle, tinkered with the irrigation and fences. Mom Dening, a 4-foot-9-inch Filipina, worked as an upholsterer.

It's part of Day lore that Alvin found the kid his first club at the dump: a black, Spalding 3-wood with half of the grip's leather wrapping gone. Jason, then 3, used his new toy to smack tennis balls around the house. "This kid's going to be a champion," Alvin said.

He was right, but it was complicated. Jason was 6 when the family moved to Rockhampton, eight hours up the Australian coast. Alvin got a job as a supervisor on the kill floor at the local slaughterhouse. Dening worked there, too.

Day has said his father taught him to treat others as you'd have them treat you. But in a small, lowlit study at Double Eagle, in the quiet wake of a thrilling and emotional win at Whistling Straits, he digs deeper about the man.

"My dad," Day says, "was a violent alcoholic. Really aggressive. If we cussed or even said 'shut up,' we would get the belt. I remember I swore at my sister one time, and she ended up telling on me to my dad. I think I was 9 years old. And

he made me sit in the mud under a mango tree while it was storming for three hours. It was dark. There were so many mosquitoes out there, so when I came in I had bites everywhere. My mom tried to get me in, but my dad wouldn't allow it."

Day's father eventually quit drinking but remained a hostile presence. Having shown a knack for golf, Day played in fear of upsetting his dad.

"I remember once shooting a [poor] score, and he goes, 'You're going to get it in the parking lot,'" Day recalls. "So I get in the car. I'm scared. We drive out of the club, he stops on the side of the road. He just starts whaling on me with both



Jason (left) showed golf talent as a kid in Australia; with his father Alvin (top) and sister Kimmy (smiling).

hands, closed-fist punching. I was 11. I had bruises all over me. But I mean, it is what it is."

Day's voice is flat, with no breaks. He sounds detached as he says this, struggling, perhaps, to remain empathetic even in the realm of such violence.

"It was embarrassing for my dad," Day says. "I knew he felt sorry, but he'd forget it straightaway. Then something else would happen, and I'd get beat up again, or my sisters would get hit."

By this time young Jason was waging his own war with alcohol, which offered an escape from his stifling home life. Scotch-and-coke, mostly. The drinking, he says, made him angry and propelled him into fights. Once, after a night of black-out boozing, he awoke in the gutter in front of their house. At least he went home. His sister Kimmy was living on the streets. "No life

goals, no nothing, no one there to tell me it was wrong," Day says. "My mom was there for us, always with a hug, but she was just so small."

Four months before Jason turned 12, his father died of stomach cancer—but not without leaving strict instructions for his wife.

"When my husband died, he knew we would get a little money, and he said to me, 'You have to buy a station wagon. Make sure it's a station wagon so you can fit his golf clubs,'" Dening recalls on the phone from Brisbane. The car, a white Daewoo Nubira, helped turn things around for the Day family. So did the decision—Jason says it was his mom's, Dening says it was Jason's—to send the budding if troubled golfer to Kooralbyn International Golf Academy, nearly 500 miles away from Rockhampton. "I had to learn how to drive," she says.

Improbably, Day arrived relatively unbroken. He had rough edges, to be sure, and was capable of a "F--- off!" Yet the furies seemed to ease with every passing hour on the range. After playing his way into the top group at Kooralbyn, Day met the director of instruction, Swatton, who would become the benevolent father he never had. Jason, like his parents, had an appetite for hard work, and when he and Swatton later moved to Hills International College, another golf academy, he based his choice of roommate (a boy who'd lost his mom to cancer) on who woke up earliest.

Day left his peers behind, authoring a gilded amateur career Down Under before turning pro at 19 and coming to America. He won on the Web.com

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: COURTESY THE DAY FAMILY





"COL HAD OPEN ARMS. HE SHAPED WHO I AM. I'D NEVER HAD THAT."

Tour almost immediately, the youngest player ever to do so. Alas, stepping up to the PGA Tour slowed his progress. It exposed Day's one big weakness: doubt. "I didn't believe I was one of the best players in the world," he says. His turbulent childhood had toughened him up but had twisted his thinking, too. The years of support he'd had—from Swatton, from his agent Martin, and from Ellie, whom he met and married a few years after arriving in the States—had both propelled and paralyzed him.

"He was hearing it as pressure to perform," Ellie says. "We literally just figured this out."

This epiphany seems to have made the difference for Day in 2015, along with the ongoing love from people who show him kindnesses he never knew. "Looking back on it, it was touch and go," Day

says of those days under his parents' roof. "But Col had open arms to me. I really needed him. He shaped who I am. But also treats me like I'm a

ing back tears. Swatton tried to avoid eye contact, lest he, too, dissolve before it was over. When it was, after Day's tap-in for a three-shot win, the emotion came pouring out. It was absolution for the kid who cried under the mango tree, who had cowered in the car after a bad round. Was he good enough now? Damn right he was.

AMID THE sobering conversation at Double Eagle, Dash Day has discovered plastic dinosaurs.

In a spare moment, father joins son in idle play. Things would get much more competitive at the end of the Tour season. After today's respite, Day will soon spar with Spieth and McIlroy for the world's top ranking and make a fierce run at the FedEx Cup. He's also slotted to lead the International team into the Presidents Cup in Korea in early October. And there are more majors to chase in 2016.

"I always knew he had the talent," Chamblee says. "I remember in 2009, at Reno-Tahoe, the first time I saw him.

son, and I hold that big. I never had that type of family growing up. It's a safe place."

Day tied for 28th at this year's Masters, and played through vertigo to finish T-9 at the U.S. Open. But a mysterious calm came over him at the British. *It's okay if I fail*, he thought to himself. *Nothing will happen to me. I'll learn, and life will go on.* He missed the playoff at St. Andrews by a stroke but kept that calm at the PGA, taking a two-shot lead into Sunday.

By the time he reached the 18th green, having parried every charge from Spieth, his playing competitor, Day was fight-

He got in on a sponsor's exemption. He hit this drive on the 9th hole—now it's the 18th—400 yards around a corner. Dogleg left, just a little downhill, not much. I thought, *My goodness—what kind of talent is that?*"

Day merely needed to harness it, mixing in what Chamblee calls "off-speed pitches"—a baseball reference to specialty shots that require more brains than brawn. "Somewhere last year, he found a softness to his shots coming into greens. It's the final piece of the puzzle."

How many majors might he win? It's crowded at the top, but Chamblee predicts at least five, which would surpass Greg Norman and put Day in the company of Aussie great Peter Thomson. Says Jason's friend and countryman Adam Scott, "He's still in his twenties. He's got such a great opportunity to go on and have an incredible career."

With the future limitless, Day is sometimes reminded of the past. Alvin was a heavy smoker, and Jason says his knees buckle at the smell of cigarettes. Years ago, he and Ellie were watching *The Greatest Game Ever Played*, the movie about Francis Ouimet, who grew up poor and with a tough, disapproving father. After Ouimet wins the 1913 U.S. Open, he's swept up in the crowd and sees his teary-eyed father.

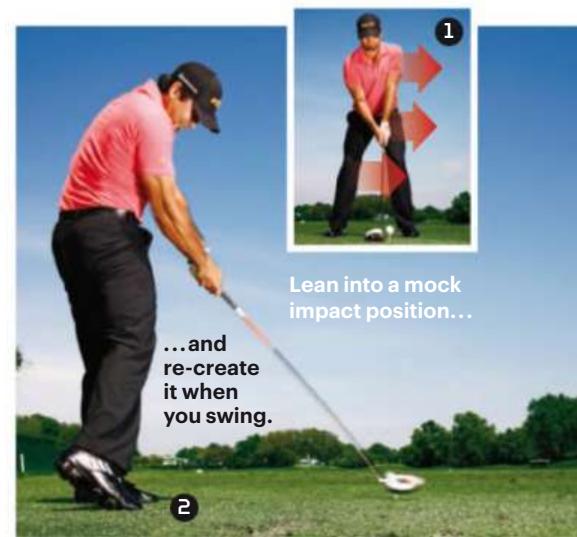
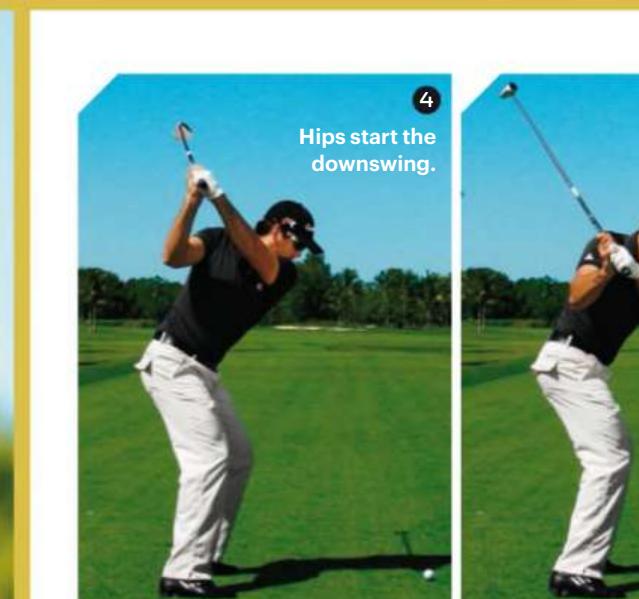
"Jason was just sobbing, and I was sobbing," Ellie says. "Certain things bring back those memories. That stuff is hard."

Day could have long ago decided that life owed him one. He could have done unto others as was done to him. Instead, he went the other way. He's always had a gift for epic par saves, none better than the one from an estuary at the 2014 PGA at Valhalla, in bare feet, his pant legs rolled up. Before he could make those escapes, he had to first save himself by re-creating himself. He's the American dream, Aussie-style.

"No matter what," he says, smiling, seemingly weightless once more, "everything is gonna be okay." ■

Dark days behind him, Jason's life is filled with light: Ellie, Dash and a brand-new Day due in November.

THE DAY WAY TO MORE

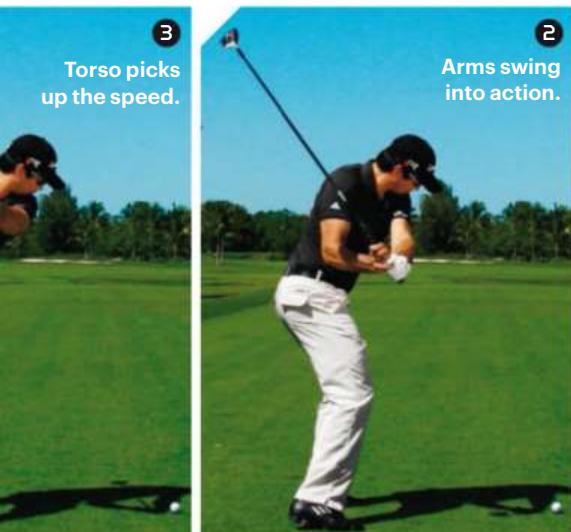


ROBERT BECKS/

BIRDIES

As Jason's coach and caddie, I know what makes his game tick. Steal his 5 best moves and play like a PGA champ.

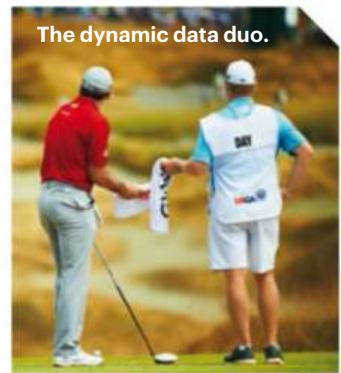
By Colin Swatton



as he engages different body parts: "1" being his hands, "2" his arms, "3" his torso and "4" his hips.
Once he reaches the top, he reverses the count

and the sequence. Try it. Make your downswing "4, 3, 2, 1" by first moving your hips, then your torso, then your arms, and finally your hands. It's a quick count—

you're not working on tempo here. But if you get it right, you'll be able to time your swing so that the club reaches full speed right at impact.



The dynamic data duo.

5 On the course, my task is to provide data—yardage, wind, elevation and more. It's Jason's job to absorb this information and formulate a few shot options, pick the one that feels the most comfortable, then go for it without a shred of doubt. It's like taking an exam—the more you study, the better you'll score.

3

At Whistling Straits, Jason was fifth both in driving distance (307.1 yds.) and fairways hit (73.2%).

Long and straight is hard to beat. Here's his secret.

1 Set up in your regular address position. Now lean toward the target in a mock impact position. Get a feel for where your hands are, specifically where the Vs formed by your thumbs and forefingers are pointing.

2 Swing. Your goal? Return your hands to the same position they were in during the drill. It works for Jason, and it'll work for you, too.

ANGUS MURRAY/24

4

WORK ON DRAINING 30-FOOT PUTTS. TAKE DEAD AIM! JASON'S TWICE AS GOOD AS THE FIELD ON THESE BECAUSE HE PRACTICES THEM.



LEFT AND ABOVE: KOJIRO KINNO/SI

7 WAYS TO Raise Your Game

Light It Up
With the
Latest and
Greatest in
Golf Tech

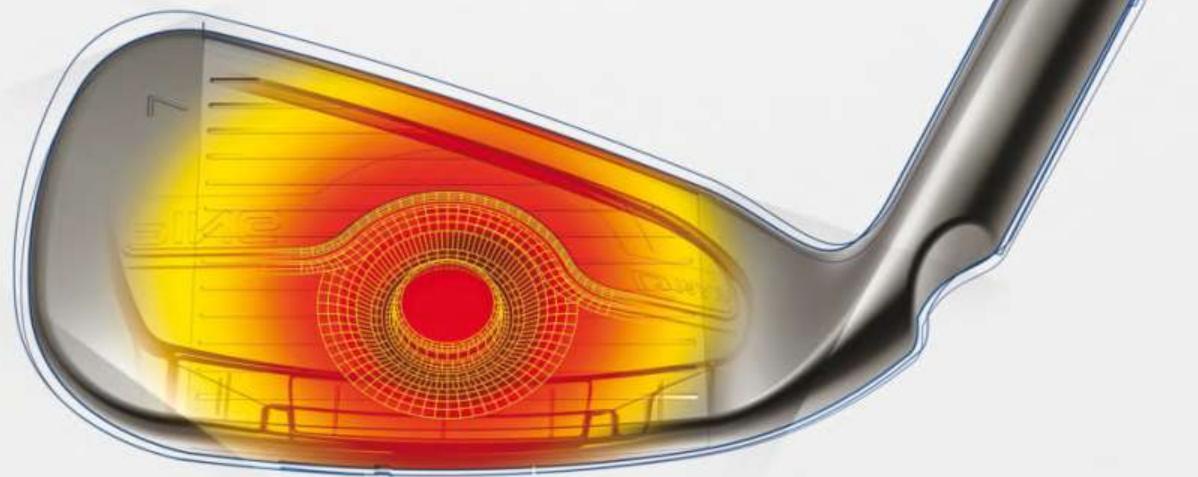
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By Michael Chwasky
Photograph by GETTY IMAGES

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A PLAYERS IRON ANYONE CAN PLAY.

The new i Series iron relies on the high strength-to-weight ratio and softer feel of 431 stainless steel to deliver players-style iron performance with wide-ranging appeal. The progressive set design is engineered for workability and trajectory control to give you the precision to play with confidence. A concealed Custom Tuning Port (CTP) creates a clean cavity design with expanded perimeter weighting for added forgiveness and consistency. Get fit today or visit ping.com. You'll be better for it.

WHY PLAY

INNOVATION

Used for the first time in a PING iron, softer-feeling 431 SS creates a players iron that's higher launching and more forgiving.

IMAGINATION

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PROGRESSIVE SET DESIGN.

Larger, forgiving long irons inspire confidence to attack greens from any distance. Smaller short irons and wedges provide precision and control.

7 WAYS TO Raise Your Game »

News flash! Golf is hard. Okay, that's not exactly a scoop. This beloved, bedeviling pastime has always been challenging. And while the game's brightest minds have sought to make it easier since before the discovery of titanium (1791), our modern age has produced some high-tech tools that would seem nothing short of magical to the golfers of yesteryear. So whether you want to shave strokes, add steps or expand your social network, here are seven innovative ways to elevate your golf life.



Match your putter to your tempo with:

Ping Cadence TR

\$169-\$259; ping.com

» ASK ANY putting guru what the keys are to a good stroke, and he or she will include good tempo. Ben Crenshaw, Steve Stricker and every other great putter moves the flatstick at a consistent speed from stroke to stroke. To hole more putts, you need to do the same. The engineers at Ping are well aware of the importance of tempo, so they've developed the Cadence TR putter line, which gives players the choice of two face inserts, one traditional (blue) and one heavy (black). The traditional-weight insert is better suited for those with moderate to fast strokes; the heavy insert is aimed at those with a slower tempo. The result of a proper fit is better lag putting for faster-tempo players and better short putting for slower swingers. Plus, the Cadence TR line is available in eight head styles that span the full range of stroke types.



Stop taking a bruising on the short grass. Ping's weighted black and blue putterfaces will help you control your roll.

4

Simplify your stroke
on the greens with:

AccuLock Ace putter

\$279; biomechsports.com

» **STRUGGLING TO** “putt for dough”? Bio Mech’s AccuLock Ace putter could put some extra cash in your pocket. It promotes a core-driven stroke, rather than one controlled by the hands and arms, for better aim. If you tend to get yippy, a 17-inch grip made to rest against the inside of the left forearm (for righties) stabilizes the hands and arms during the stroke. More features include an upright lie angle that promotes a straight-back, straight-through motion, and a square face angle at impact for smoother roll.

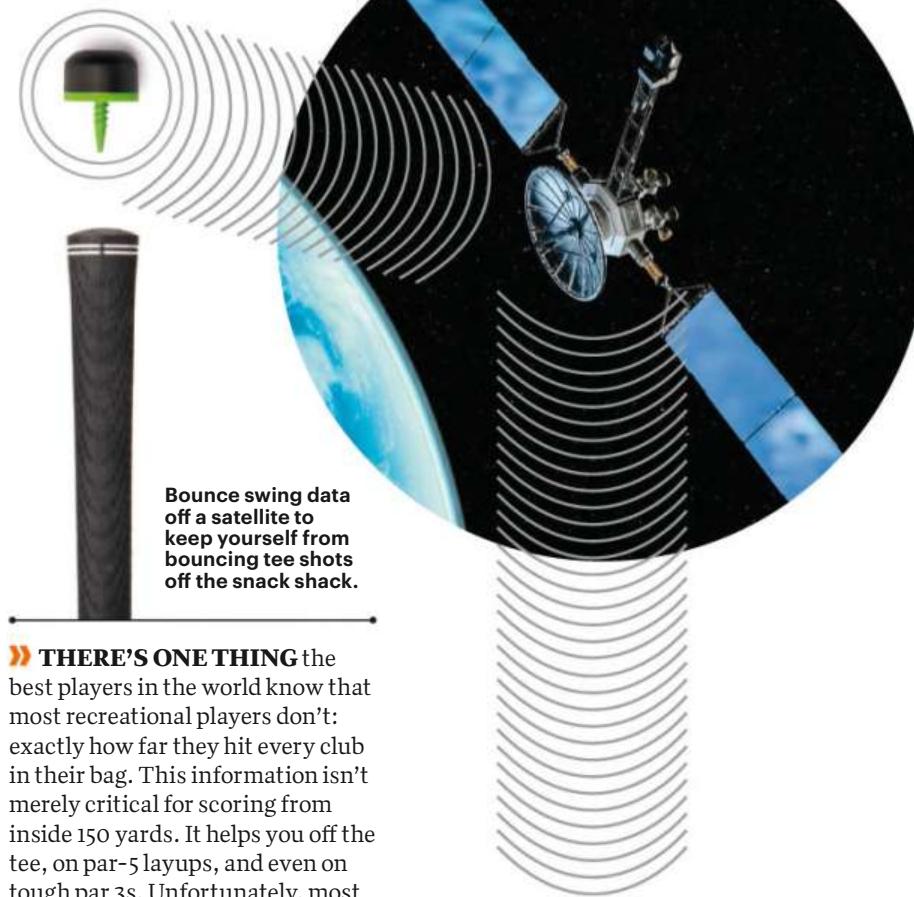


5

Dial in your yardages on
every single club with:

Arccos GPS

\$299; arccosgolf.com



» **THERE'S ONE THING** the best players in the world know that most recreational players don't: exactly how far they hit every club in their bag. This information isn't merely critical for scoring from inside 150 yards. It helps you off the tee, on par-5 layups, and even on tough par 3s. Unfortunately, most weekend players don't have access to this critical info; no one wants to manually activate a GPS device on every shot or continually load stats into an app. The Arccos system—which easily attaches to the grip end of any club—solves this problem. It automatically measures and records every stroke you make during a round. That info is then available for viewing using the company's free iPhone app. You can see how far you hit each shot, how many putts you struck, how many greens you hit, and a lot more. Also, Arccos works in real time, so you can review the data on the course and refine your strategy. And in golf, knowledge is power.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: GRIP: JESSE REITER; SATELLITE: GETTY IMAGES; GPS: COURTESY ARCCOS

2

Get in shape
and relax by
walking with:

Big Max Golf Blade Trolley

\$239; bigmaxusa.com



» **FACT IS,** walking is a lot better for you than taking a cart. A University of Colorado study revealed that golfers who hoof 18 holes log about 13,000 steps on average (that's more than six miles), compared with 6,000 steps for the cart brigade. Beyond good health, players who walk tend to be more relaxed on the course and shoot better scores. Since the near disappearance of the caddie, the deterrent to walking is the strain of carrying your own bag or hauling a creaky cart that fights you every step of the way. Enter the Big Max Blade. The lightweight pushcart (less than 15 pounds) folds easily and is customizable for your personal needs. Plus, an adjustable handle facilitates a more ergonomic walking position and helps you stay comfortable while you play.

Make strides
in your game
with a sleek assist
from Big Max.

3

Network with players like
you (and others, too) with:

GolfMatch app

free; golfmatchapp.com

» **IN A WORLD** where social media plays such an integral role, you'd think there would be a golf-specific app for players who want to share their experiences, information, and network with fellow enthusiasts. Alas, there hasn't been much to choose from. Now, with GolfMatch (free at the iTunes app store), players can set up games, trade opinions on the latest gear and courses, post photos, and even find out where to go for a great golf vacation. GolfMatch performs many other functions, including scanning Instagram for the best golf-related photos and aggregating all the latest news and headlines from a wide range of news sources. Don't forget to post and share videos so any pro with the GolfMatch phone app can fix your swing on the go. So click to it!





6

Strike it like a pro for longer and straighter iron shots with:

DST Compressor 8-iron

\$99; dstgolf.com

» FEW SENSATIONS in golf beat the concussive crunch of a well-struck iron. As Kevin Costner says in *Tin Cup*, “A tuning fork goes off in your heart and your...”...um, Pinnacles. That addictive feeling is the ball compressing against the sweet spot at impact. You probably don’t compress your irons enough, primarily because of imperfect technique. To pure it, you must hit the ball with a descending blow, with your hands “leading” the clubhead through the hitting zone. The DST practice club’s curved shaft forces you to get your hands into the power position. The shaft shape is also designed to help your through-swing and your weight shift. The golf swing, in three words? Compress for success.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: CLUB COURTESY DST GOLF; GOLFER, MARK NEWCOME/VISONS IN GOLF; ARM, JESSE REITER



Track your stats and your health with:

Microsoft Band with TaylorMade myRoundPro

\$179; microsoftstore.com; myroundpro.com

» EVER FEEL OVERWHELMED by the number of areas in your game that need work? We feel you. A good place to start is to accurately and consistently track your stats. You may not have access to ShotLink data, but now you can get similar info using the Microsoft Band. Originally developed for fitness fanatics, the band is now geared toward golfers, too, thanks to a partnership with TaylorMade. The myRoundPro analytics platform lets you track data such as Strokes Gained, proximity to the hole, fairways hit and greens in regulation, so you can gauge your strengths and identify ways to improve scoring. After each round, you can access a summary on the Microsoft Health phone app (for iOS, Android, and Windows) or the Microsoft Health web dashboard. The device also monitors your heart rate, steps taken, calories burned and sleep quality, so you can track your wellness while working on your game. Hey... stats incredible!



Knowing your numbers—from greens hit to Strokes Gained—adds muscle to your game.



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ENGINEERED
FOR YOU

CUSTOM
FIT
FOR YOU

CUSTOM
BUILT
FOR YOU

NEW STEEL, SOLID FEEL.

Softer-feeling 431 stainless steel head delivers workability and trajectory control with just the right amount of forgiveness.

IMPROVEMENT

Distance, accuracy and versatility deliver the consistent performance you rely on to lower your scores and enjoy the game more.



CONFIDENCE & CONTROL

SOLID, FORGIVING.

An elastomer CTP positioned lower in the face aligns with the impact area to deliver a solid sound and feel. Added forgiveness comes from tungsten toe weights in the 3-7 irons.



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THE NEW WEDGE WITH A HISTORY OF SUCCESS.

GLIDE ES WEDGE INSPIRED BY LEGENDARY EYE2 SAND WEDGE.

The Glide ES is engineered from grip to sole to ensure short-game performance by increasing spin and consistency. A longer Dyla-wedge grip, CFS Wedge shaft (weight, flex and balance optimized) and head design (moisture-repelling 431 stainless steel, added bounce, and loft-optimized Gorge grooves) deliver unmatched versatility and consistency. Get fit today or visit ping.com. You'll be better for it.

TAPERED HOSEL

The smaller hosel leading into the face decreases the cross section for less drag through the sand.



SCOOPED SOLE

Like the original Eye2, a scooped sole offers versatility on full and partial shots from all conditions, especially bunkers.



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AK-CHIN SOUTHERN DUNES GC



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Pelz instruction has helped thousands of golfers, including some of the world's finest professionals, play and score their very best. If you want to see how much your game can improve when you use proven short game and putting techniques, join us at upcoming school and discover your true potential for lower scores. It's the best investment you can make in your game.

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AK-CHIN SOUTHERN DUNES GC, PHOENIX

CALIFORNIA

CIMARRON GOLF CLUB, PALM SPRINGS

STRAWBERRY FARMS GC, NEWPORT BEACH

CHARDONNAY GOLF CLUB, NAPA

FLORIDA

BOCA RATON RESORT & CLUB, BOCA RATON

PGA NATIONAL, PALM BEACH GARDENS

GEORGIA

CHATEAU ELAN, ATLANTA

NEVADA

STALLION MOUNTAIN GC, LAS VEGAS

TEXAS

ESCONDIDO GOLF & LAKE CLUB, AUSTIN

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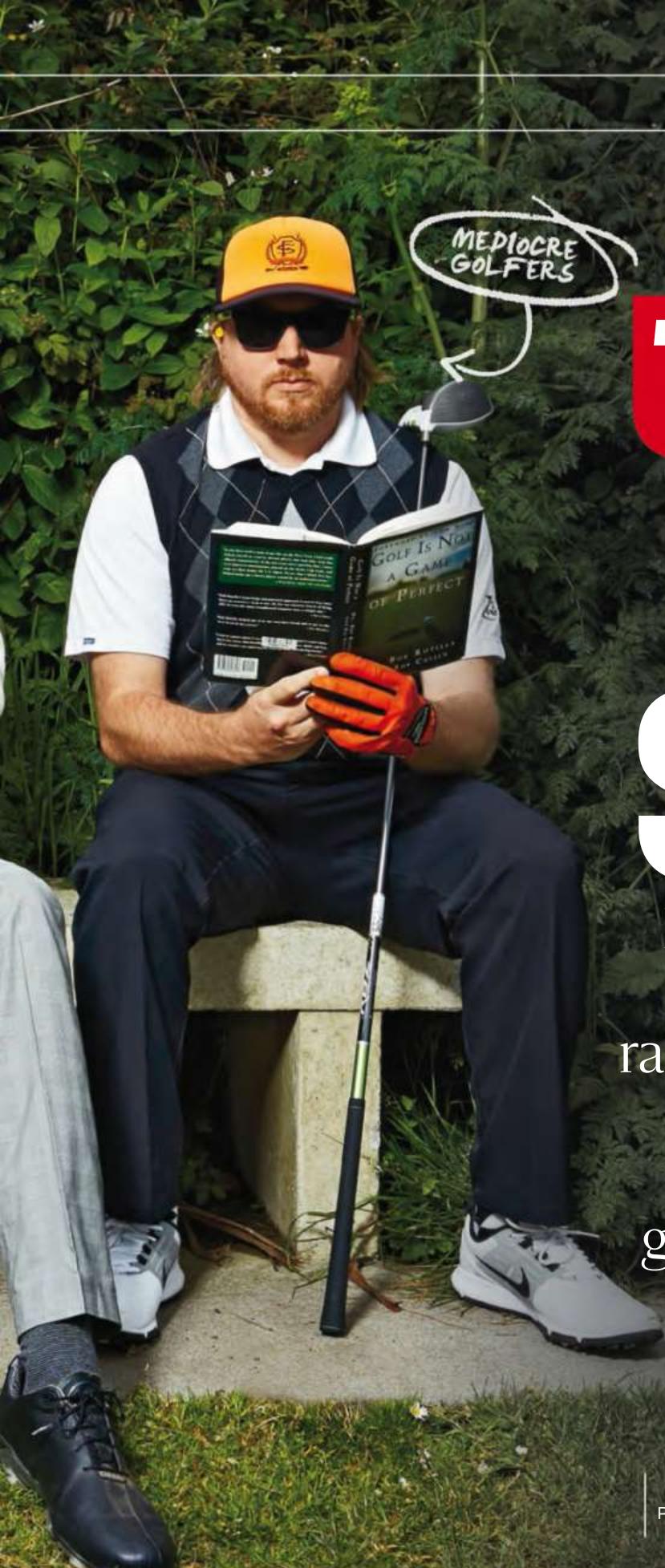
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MAKE GOLF FUN



"WE WON'T GROW GOLF BY MAKING THE HOLE BIGGER," MGA FOUNDER MORLEY SAYS. "WE NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY WE APPROACH THE GAME."



"FACE IT: We SUCK"

Hackers of the world, unite! The growing ranks of the **Mediocre Golf Association** know they'll never go low. And accepting this has made the game a lot more fun.

BY JOSH SENS
Portraits by Gabriela Hasbun



MEDIocre GOLFERS

Jon Morley was born into a happy home in the Cincinnati suburbs and raised by loving parents. They taught him to see the world around him without limits. He could be a doctor, an astronaut, an author. Anything was possible, his mom and dad assured him, as long as he pursued it with full-throttle persistence.

Sweet people, the Morleys, although they clearly knew diddly about golf.

At some point in his teens, Morley swung a club for the first time. Most of his shots were lousy, but the few he caught flush were enough to hook him. He bought new sticks, sought the wisdom of swing gurus, emulated the players he saw on the tube. Slowly he improved. *I got this*, he thought, inspired by rah-rah TV spots and grip-it-and-rip-it magazine articles. *I will bomb it like the pros, stiff every approach shot, NEVER miss a birdie putt!*

Yeah, right. As time wore on, Morley wore out, frustrated by a game he'd failed to master. Only after college did it dawn on him that he'd been drinking the Kool-Aid. Just as he'd never pilot a spacecraft to a distant planet, he'd never be scratch.

Anything is possible? In golf? Please.

The veil of fantasy had been lifted, Morley says, and he came to view golfers for what they really are: victims of outsize expectations chasing a fanciful dream. He'd been one of them. But now he'd seen the light.

The secret to golf, he realized, is that there is no secret. A precious few have a gift for it. Most don't. For the talent-starved majority, attitude adjustment is the only hope—a cheerful embrace of mediocrity.

"It was really amazing," Morley says, standing outside the modest clubhouse on a bright blue afternoon at Franklin Canyon Golf Course, not far from San Francisco. "When I accepted that I just wasn't very good, the game became a lot more fun." Around him mill a gaggle of so-so golfers who've made similar peace with themselves.

Not that they've given up entirely.

Quite the contrary. They're here to compete in the Fore! Championship, a stroke-play event that will help identify the most middling among them. It's a midseason showcase of the Mediocre Golf Association, a scrappy outfit that, under Morley's stewardship, has taken averageness to unprecedented heights.

"By the end of today, someone will rise to the top of this mediocre heap," Morley says. "And really, is there a greater honor than that?"

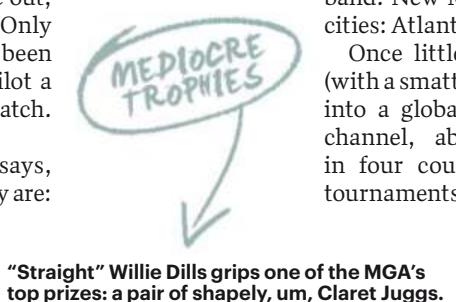
At 35, with a lean, athletic build, Morley earns his keep as a race-car-driving instructor. He also steers the wheel as "el presidente" of the MGA, a title he's held since 2006, when he and a buddy, Willie Dills, hatched the idea while chopping up a par-3 course in San Francisco. Avid golfers of ordinary skill, they mocked themselves by making joking reference to the popular PGA Tour slogan: "These guys are good." *Sure* they are—but what's wrong with being just kinda all right?

What started as a punch line ("We're more like the Mediocre Golf Association!") gave rise to weekend outings, which picked up stragglers. Participation swelled. The outings evolved into competitions, complete with trophies and fake prize money. The "really big checks" that winners walked away with were exactly that: three-by-five-foot cardboard replicas that no bank would ever cash.

At first, marketing was strictly word-of-mouth. Then in 2012, Morley and Dills upgraded their website, and the buzz spread at the speed of broadband. New MGA chapters sprang up in far-flung cities: Atlanta, Albuquerque, Adelaide.

Once little more than a ragtag men's league (with a smattering of women), the MGA has grown into a global operation, with its own YouTube channel, about 1,400 dues-paying members in four countries, and a nine-month slate of tournaments, culminating each year in Las Vegas with a "world championship."

The scores vary wildly, but the ethos never wavers. It's printed right there, in the welcome note on the website's homepage: "Face it, you suck. Join the MGA."



"Straight" Willie Dills grips one of the MGA's top prizes: a pair of shapely, um, Claret Juggs.



AS RALLYING cries go, it's not exactly Rockne-esque. But the underlying sentiment has inspired a growing number of golfers. "In this f--king game, you've got to be able to laugh at yourself," says Justin Davidson, a 33-year-old paramedic from Oakland, Calif., who signed up with the MGA just after its



"Fat" Mike Burkett, Jon "Lucky Kick" Morley, and Dills are aligned in their thinking: Hackers gonna hack.

birth. On the par-5 first hole at Franklin Canyon, Davidson has cause to chuckle when his spine-cracking swing produces a daisy-cutter that whistles left into the weeds.

Though he'd entered the Fore! Championship as a 19-index, that hefty number isn't going to help him here. The MGA handicap system turns the format on its head, penalizing stronger players instead of giving shots to weaker ones. Under the system, an 18-index is the cutoff. Anyone below 18 gets slapped with extra strokes; anyone above it receives no charity at all. A net tally of 80 is the lowest score allowed in competition.

In part, such policies are a safeguard against sandbagging. They also reflect Morley's conviction that par, for most golfers, is preposterous.

"The lowest the average player is probably ever going to get is right around an 18-handicap," he says. "Anything below that isn't realistic."

In the MGA, he adds, "bogey is our par. You shoot 18-over on a par 72? Congratulations. You're pretty much scratch."

There's even a lexicon of lowered expectations. In MGA-speak, a par 4 reached in three shots is referred to as a "green in regulation," a par is a "mirdie," a birdie is a "meagle"—in short, otherwise familiar golf terms have an "m" for mediocre tacked on up front.

For outsiders, the lingo can be dizzying. For MGA-ers it's a source of hope. After finding his wild drive on the par-5 opener, Justin Davidson

"IT WAS AMAZING," MORLEY SAYS. "WHEN I FINALLY ACCEPTED THAT I WASN'T VERY GOOD, THE GAME BECAME A LOT MORE FUN."

has wedged back to the fairway and now faces an uphill 200-yard third shot to a pin set deep on a roller-coaster green.

"If I hole this one," he says excitedly, "it's a malbatross."

ACCORDING TO the National Golf Foundation, the average golfer in the United States is about 44 years old and has a household income of \$91,400. MGA members are tougher to profile, and not just because their ranks include the likes of "Fat" Mike Burkett, a punk-rock singer and guitarist whose orange mohawk and marriage to a buxom dominatrix place him well outside the golf mainstream. Though "Fat" Mike has failed to show up for his tee time at the Fore! (speculation is that he was sleeping off a bender in his spouse's dungeon), the 32-player field reflects a broad sampling of the human carnival. There is a teacher, a lawyer, a painter, a social worker, a marketing consultant, and a Facebook 

MEDIocre GOLFERS

engineer. Ages span five decades. Incomes range from seven figures to whatever their meager pensions pay.

Nor can the players be strictly classified as hacks. For all his claims to mediocrity, Morley is a better-than-middling stick, a 9-index with a silken swing and a handy touch around the greens. On this sun-kissed afternoon, he is equaled in his adequacy by several others, including Dave Armstrong, a San Francisco plumber, and a loquacious Canadian named Steve Pottier, who earns a healthy living hawking tablet supplements that he claims will make any man longer—though not necessarily off the tee.

On the strength of solid iron play, Pottier tours the front nine in a tidy 40 strokes, but on the long par-3 11th he launches a balloon that drifts into a red-staked hazard, a spot that no pill on the planet can provide relief for. He won't get a drop, either.

Although the MGA shirks convention in spirit, it hews closely to the letter of golf law. No mulligans. No gimmes. No foot-wedges. In tournaments, Morley says, "We want to make it serious, but not so serious that people will cheat to win, or get pissed off if they don't."

That same balance applies online. The MGA YouTube channel and website feature reams of legitimate info (MGA rankings, player profiles) next to larkish features like DuffVision, a slow-motion video analysis of hapless swings that plays like a Peter Kostis parody: "Right here, his elbow turns. That's where he gets all his power—his elbows."

If you don't find that kind of thing funny, no worries—the MGA would be pleased if you just stayed away. A sense of humor is required for membership, Morley says, and he thinks that most golfers have one. In fact, he notes, the group's cheeky outlook may be a solution to one of the game's most stubborn issues.

"We're not going to grow golf by making the hole bigger or by shortening courses," Morley says. "That's ridiculous. We don't need to change the game. We just need to change how we approach it."

Out at Franklin Canyon, the tournament continues under a thinning leaderboard. After his par-3 debacle, Pottier fades, and Morley's putting is too patchy for him to make a run. But the plumber, Dave Armstrong, plays like a plumber,



He lacks Lexi Thompson's game, but Morley is good with a golf towel.

THE MEDIOCRO GOLF ASSOCIATION STRIKES A BALANCE. A SENSE OF HUMOR IS REQUIRED, BUT RULES AND ETIQUETTE ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

Check out MGATour.com for more (mediocre) information

piping drives, fitting irons into tricky pin positions and, whenever he bends to pick up his ball, flashing the cleavage that is the hallmark of his trade.

With a par-correction, a mirdie—on 18, Armstrong closes with an 84 and, by four strokes, the victory. A short while later, amid beers and backslaps, Armstrong is presented with a small trophy and a huge check of no value.

The win helps raise his standing on the MGA "money list." He's on solid footing for the rest of the season, which includes a busy slate of events (including the Douche Bag Invitational and the Last Gasp) leading up to this month's Mediocre Golf World Championship, in Las Vegas.

That competition will be the true test, with its imposing field of top mediocrities from around the globe. Among them: an affable Ohioan named Bill Morley. Yes, that's right, the same Bill Morley who, years ago, urged his young son to shoot for the moon, to scale great heights, to never settle for second best.

Check out the old man now: He's founder and president of the Cincinnati chapter of the MGA. ☎

Golf taught me:

- Responsibility
- Judgment
- Confidence
- All of the Above



In elementary schools, on golf courses and at youth centers across the country, The First Tee is teaching life-enhancing skills that empower young people to make decisions for their future. Get involved today. www.thefirsttee.org

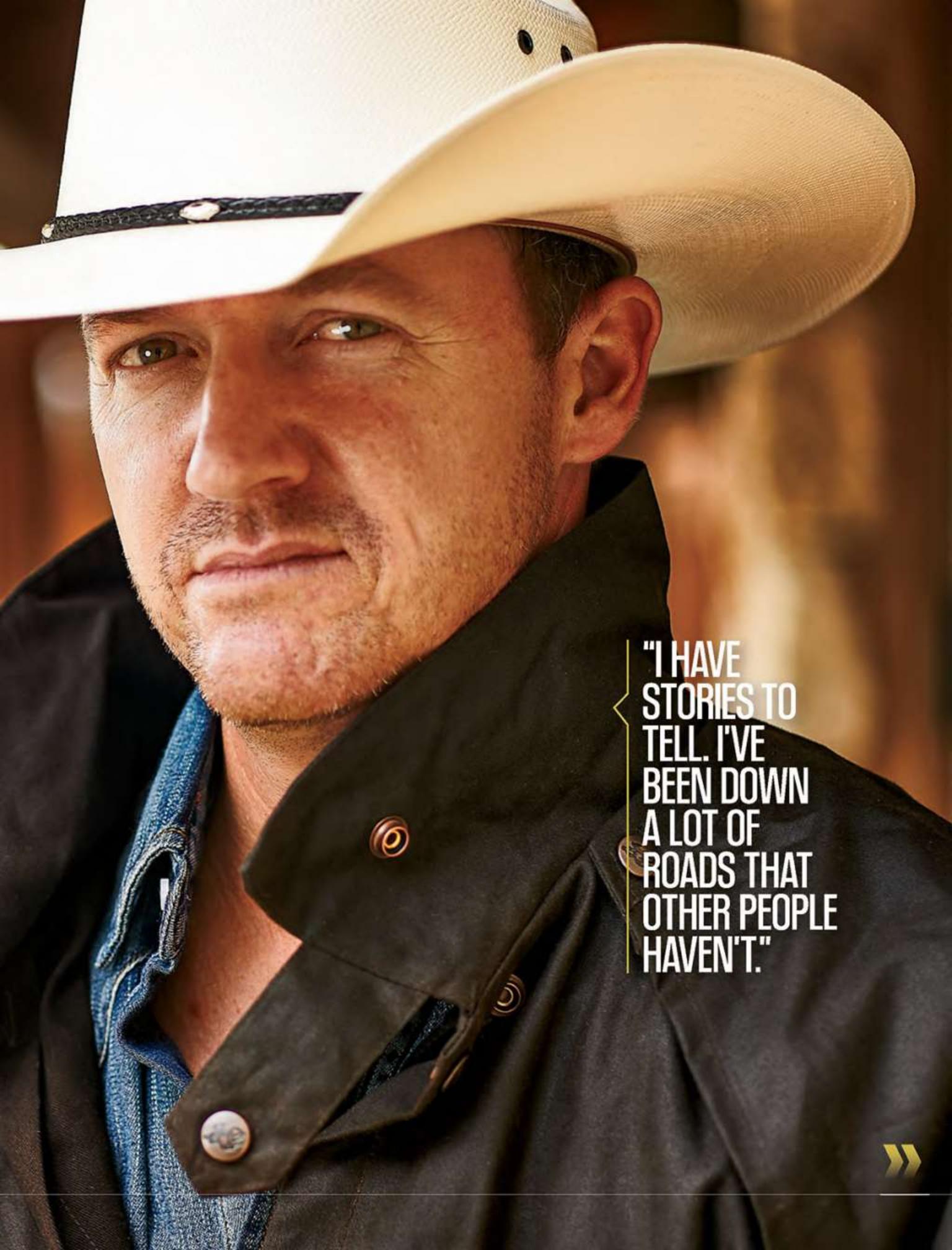


:: JIMMY WALKER ::

true grit



After a forgettable decade on Tour, Jimmy Walker is now gunning for greatness, with five wins in a two-year span. He's a man in black, with swagger to burn and hard-fought victories to claim.



"I HAVE
STORIES TO
TELL. I'VE
BEEN DOWN
A LOT OF
ROADS THAT
OTHER PEOPLE
HAVEN'T."



John Wayne has nothing on Jimmy Walker. Like the screen legend, Walker is tall, lanky and ruggedly handsome. He also looks good in western regalia, as selected for his GOLF interview and photo shoot at Cordillera Ranch Golf Club in the suburbs of San Antonio. Not that the 36-year-old has a closet full of Stetsons. "I never dress like this," Walker says with a laugh. "I've never even sat on a horse." Walker is no stereotypical Texan. Nor is he a stereotypical pro. After 187 winless starts, he bagged three Tour titles in the 2013-14 season and added two more in 2015, firmly affixing himself as a top-20 player and a major contender. And if the pro golf gig doesn't pan out, Walker has a fallback: He's an accomplished astrophotographer. Maybe his meteoric rise isn't surprising after all...

You kicked off 2015 with a staggering nine-shot win at the Sony Open. How does it feel to be so "in the zone"?

On the greens, I was seeing the lines so good, and I was reading the grain. I was calculating everything just perfectly. I'd put the ball down to line up, get over it and, I mean, it was *perfect* every time. I was making everything. There was no doubt in my mind. That's the zone that everybody talks about, and you don't realize it until after the fact. You sit back and you're like, "Holy crap, what just happened?"

Two months later, in March, you won your fifth Tour event—in your home base of San Antonio, at the Valero Texas Open. Where does that victory rank for you?

To have a tournament right where you live is very cool. And then to win it? Wow, that's big. It meant a lot to me, to come home after winning and be here with all my friends. We opened a five-liter bottle of wine and ate pizza and sat on the back porch and relived the day. You just don't get to do that often. [All wins] are different. They're all special. And you learn something about yourself every time you do it. At the Valero, I learned how to fend off a young stud who was coming for me.

And you succeeded. Paired with a charging Jordan Spieth, you managed to hold him off. That was a blast. I'd never done that, where you just start dueling. It was a good fight and he kept firing at me. I had a nice little lead, thank goodness. That was fun. And Jordan's a great kid. I've got nothing but good things to say about him and the way he handles himself.

A lot of today's top players came from Texas—Spieth and Patrick Reed, to name two. Do you feel a sense of regional pride?

Hell, yeah. I always joke, "Texas, man—it's the greatest country in the world." [Laughs] There is a lot of pride. And people in Texas, bar none, are the friendliest, nicest people you'll ever meet. I travel all over the country, all over the world, and I'm happy to call Texas home.

Spieth was 19 when he won his first Tour event. You were 34. Was there an upside to waiting so long for that breakthrough win? Did the journey add character?

Yeah, maybe. I have a lot of stories to tell, because I've been down a lot of roads people haven't been. It's rare that you get a straight-out success story [like Spieth's], and it's great when you do, because that's what the game needs. But the game also needs other good stories, and it's cool to be able to tell mine. I'm not just Jimmy Walker the golfer. I have a lot of friends. I've got two little boys, I've got a great family. It's all stuff that's helped me become better.

There's so much talent on Tour, and it's so hard to win. As you were coming up the ranks, did you ever think, If I just had a chance to stay out here for a while, I'd make it, and I'd stay.

Yes and no. I mean, I had my chance. When you get your card, you do have your chance. It

literally takes one or two really good weeks, and that's it. You could play 20 events and that's all it really takes. I had my chances, and I didn't do it. So I had to go back and go to Q-School. But it's all stuff that you learn from and it makes you better. I'm not going to say that if I came straight out of Q-school and was just a world-beater and crushed it like Jordan Spieth is doing, that it would be any different. I don't know, and I'll never know. All I know is what I've done, and what I feel like it's made me into. I'm 36 years old now. I've done a lot of stuff. I've got a wife, kids, family, a lot of stuff going on. I wouldn't change anything I've done in my past to be where I'm at right now.

What struggles have you faced?

In '07, my wife, Erin, was talking about going back to work because we were running out of money. Those were tough, tough talks.

Was that your lowest low?

No, the lowest was around '08, '09. I was like, "I just don't want to keep doing this if I'm not going to get out of it what I want." Yeah, I was playing on the PGA Tour, but it's a grind, especially if you finish 125th on the money list, which I did one year [2009]. And there's nothing fun about that. It's grueling, and it puts a lot of pressure on you, your family and on life in general.

Where did you go from there?

About four years ago I made a shift in the way I do things. I was tired of finishing 125th in money. I was working hard but working on the wrong things, and I wanted to figure out what to change, how to put different people in place to help me get better. I sought out who I thought was the best instructor. I got new management. I got a trainer who took care of my body and my injuries. I grabbed up all these people, and they really helped me. I have no problem giving credit where credit is due. And these people really helped me be better.

One of those change agents was Butch Harmon, your swing coach. What has he meant to your game and career?

When I went to Butch, I told him I was a blank slate. I said, "I'll hit balls, and I want you to tell me what you think." He told me what to do, and we've been doing it. I still need to work on some things, and we make tweaks here and there.



Walker's first Tour win was at the 2013 Frys.com Open (left). He grabbed his fifth victory in March at the Valero Texas Open (below).

With him at my side, we've done some really good stuff.

Five wins over the last two years is good stuff, all right. Share some of your trade secrets. What tweaks did Butch have you make?

He's given me a big injection of confidence. When the world's best teacher keeps telling you how good you are and that you're going to win, and you're going to win a lot—well, it's just weird that it's happened. [Laughs] It's like he literally gave me an injection of confidence. Butch makes you believe in what he says, and he makes you believe in yourself.

What were those first sessions like?

It was intimidating as hell. I sat in his office and he goes, "So what do you want?" I told him what I wanted to improve. He got me hitting balls in front of him. But he doesn't put on a show like he's the big dog. He's just an old-fashioned good ol' boy, and he made me feel at ease. I got done hitting balls, and I was like, "Wow, that felt really productive." It was great. I got everything out of it I wanted. And I think that's an indicator of a good teacher. He made me believe that what he was telling me was right. It wasn't, "How did that feel?" He doesn't care how it feels. He knows swing changes will feel bad at first. He'd just say, "You were doing it right" or "You were doing it wrong." He's direct. I appreciate that.

It sounds like he taught you to believe in yourself and to trust the process.

He makes you believe that what he's telling you is the truth: "This is how it works, this is how we'll do it, and this is why." And you're like, "Yeah, yeah, that's exactly right." You don't refute it. There's a lot of trust. It's harder to trust the older you get, and I came to Butch late. People don't like to be told what to do. It's human nature. The older we get, the harder it is to change. It's taken a lot of discipline to accept what he says.

Because Butch has helped you so much, does it ever make you think, Tiger's crazy to have ever left this guy?

I can't get into what Tiger is doing. [It's easy to think], Wow, you're on that great run, you've got a great thing going. Why change? I don't

FROM FAMINE TO FEAST

WALKER'S FIRST SEVEN SEASONS ON THE PGA TOUR:

0
WINS

WALKER'S PAST TWO SEASONS ON THE PGA TOUR:

5
WINS



have the answer to what Tiger's doing. But I like the run I'm on.

Once players get to your level, they tend to plan their season schedule around the major events. Do you also find yourself doing that now?

Some guys do. But it's more of, there's different world events that you're allowed to play in when your world ranking gets up, and you get on a different of a schedule, and that's very new for me. I'm still trying to adjust to it a little bit. But I'm not "gearing up." If I do my work, I can show up and play any golf course, any tournament. The majors are still golf. I'm still out there playing with the same guys I play golf with every week.

You're not a flashy guy. You have a quiet demeanor. Do you think this negatively impacts the attention you deserve?

Probably. I'm on the wrong side of 35. I do all the fun stuff the kids do, but I don't publicize it a lot on social media.

You might be the only Tour winner whose wife has more Twitter followers.

[Laughs] That's probably true. Erin knows what to say and what not to say, and she's good about it. I'm just not into it. Twitter's weird. I don't mind Twitter for news, but it just seems like there's a lot of mean-spirited stuff on Twitter. I'm more on Instagram. I'm more of an artist off the golf course. I like astronomy, and taking pictures [of the stars]—just letting everybody in a little bit on my life. Instagram, to me, seems more of a place for real fans, for people who are engaging and really appreciative. I tried Twitter for a bit and didn't get much out of it. But I've got more Instagram followers than my wife has Twitter followers. [Laughs]

Let's talk about the 2014 Ryder Cup, at Gleneagles in Scotland. It was your first Ryder Cup, and Team USA endured a stinging defeat. Was it a mostly positive or negative experience?

It was a bummer for the team, and a bummer for the U.S., the way it all shook down. For me personally, I got to meet and hang out with a bunch of new guys. I took away a lot from that. I learned a lot about myself.

Walker won 2.5 points for Team USA in his 2014 Ryder Cup debut at Gleneagles in Scotland.

JAMIE SQUIRE/GETTY IMAGES



"**I APPEAR CALM, BUT I'M FIERY. I CAN GET PISSED. IT'S QUIET RAGE. I'M NOT ALL ROSES AND DAISIES."**

What lessons did you learn?

I learned how engaged I could be in every shot I hit. I got done with the week and I was very tired. Every shot I hit at the Ryder Cup meant something *way bigger* than just me. I was playing for Rickie [Fowler, Walker's partner in four matches]. I was playing for my team. I was playing for my country. It was a big deal to me, and I gave it everything I had.

What was it like playing against Rory McIlroy, who was coming off two major wins?

It was a blast. Making putts on top of Rory was just one highlight. Holing a bunker shot [for eagle], making chips, having a killer singles match [Walker defeated Lee Westwood]. It

was all positives, an amazing week. I look back at pictures and all those people in the crowds, and the way the locals treated us—it was incredible. I want to be on the next team.

Do you think the team suffered from a lack of leadership under Tom Watson?

We all went out and played as hard as we could. For what we were told to do, we went out and gave it everything we had. Nobody slacked off. We just got beat. Could other guys have played when some guys were mentally toast? Yes, maybe. Second-guessing is easy. The two teams are so equal—winning is a flip of the coin. It sucks, but there's going to be a loser. On paper we were better, but we got beat.

You're passionate about astrophotography. Do you get to devote much time to it?

Quite a bit. I find little odd times to do it. I've gotten efficient—or maybe that's just my style. A lot of guys take weeks and weeks to work on a picture, but I can bust through one in an hour or two. It's therapeutic. It keeps my

brain working. I feel like I'm doing something productive outside of the game, outside of my life. You've got to have something outside of what you do that keeps you sane.

Do you obsess over your rounds?

Everybody thinks I'm so calm and collected, but I'm pretty fiery. I can get ticked off. I keep it to myself, but I can get pissed. It's quiet rage—it's not roses and daisies all the time. But you have to let it go. Just give me 45 minutes after the round, let me chill out. You've got to vent, to release. We all do. Hell, everybody's got a bad day. It's just that *our* bad days are online and on TV. It's tough. A lot of this stuff is still new to me, and something I need to get better at. I've never had to answer questions after a bad round, because, you know, nobody cared. [Laughs] Now people care.

Does having a stable family life make you a better player?

"**I CAN'T GET INTO WHAT TIGER IS DOING. I DON'T HAVE THE ANSWER TO THAT.**"

Definitely. It helps provide an important sense of balance. It puts things into perspective. Before I had a family, I felt like it was always about golf. And I've come to realize that it's important to put the game away and shut the door on it for a while. It's okay to take a week off. It's okay to take two weeks off. I've learned about quality, not quantity.

You've gone from a journeyman to a juggernaut. What hopes do you have for your golf legacy?

I hope my legacy is not even close to being written. I feel and hope that I'm just starting to scratch the surface. Butch tells me all the time, "You're not even close to being done." And I've started to believe it. I want to do a lot more in golf. I'm 36, but I hit it farther than all the kids coming out. I chip and putt as good as I ever have, I hit it as good as I ever have, and I'm smarter than I've ever been. So maybe that's a good recipe. ☀

In Hawaii, before winning the Sony Open, Walker played from a buried lie with his wife, Erin, and sons Beckett, 2, and McLain, 5.



KOHJIRO KINNO/SI

The Shop

The Best New Gear

EDITED BY ROB SAUERHAFT



AP1 716 »

\$900, steel; \$1,100, graphite; golf.com/titleist
Titleist has raised the bar on its terrific AP1 714. Well, actually, it has replaced the bar. Whereas the 714 has a bar running from the back of the head to the face, the stainless steel AP1 716 sports a 360-degree undercut cavity and a thinner, unsupported face. It's more flexible than its predecessor, which leads to more ball speed, a higher launch and likely more carry distance. The 3- through 7-irons have 50 percent more tungsten in the low toe than the previous AP1 (42 grams per club versus 28). That boosts MOI by 4 percent and lowers CG, letting Titleist strengthen lofts by one degree without flattening launch. Plus, more sole camber should prevent digging for mid-handicappers who need help through impact.

Titleist

THE FAB

New Titleist irons built for beauty and speed

By Michael Chwasky

« AP2 716

\$1,200, steel; \$1,400, graphite

Added forgiveness (and ball speed) should expand the AP2's appeal in 2016 without compromising its Tour pedigree. The 3- through 7-irons have 25 percent more tungsten in the heel and toe than the 714 model (56 grams per club), which concentrates mass low and toward the perimeter. And because the AP2 716's blade length is identical to the AP2 714's, the result—an 8.5 percent higher MOI—is even more impressive. The 3- through 5-irons have a slightly lower CG that's positioned closer to where you typically strike the ball, which helps increase speed. And by design, this model has launch and spin characteristics that are similar to the AP2 714.

» Titleist irons have traditionally been the choice of highly skilled players who favor shot-shaping and control over pure distance and forgiveness. The iconic clubmaker's 2016 stable still caters to Tour pros and club champs, but its newest sticks—

FOUR

both the better-player offerings and the ones for average Joes—pack a heap of help into their compact designs. The company uses several cool technologies, including high-density tungsten, to improve launch, forgiveness and distance without compromising Titleist's hallmark look, feel or control.



T-MB 716

\$200/club, steel;
\$225/club, graphite

Don't let its bladelike profile fool you. The stainless-steel body is packed with a high-strength steel face reinforced with tungsten weights in the heel and toe. This distribution of mass contributes to a low, deep CG and an MOI that's 6.8 percent higher than the one found in existing 712U utility irons. The T-MB also has one-degree stronger lofts than the 712U, which helps generate, on average, 2 mph more ball speed and an extra 3.9 yards of carry. The T-MB profile and blade lengths are similar to the AP2's, and the sticks come with True Temper Dynamic Gold AMT steel shafts that are lighter in the long irons and heavier in the short. Standard lofts are 17°, 20°, 23° and 26°, but full sets (\$1,600, steel; \$1,800, graphite) are available through Titleist's MOTO ("made only to order") program.



CB 716

\$1,200, steel; \$1,400, graphite

Tungsten finds its way into these forgings, lending stability to the carbon steel CB. The 3- through 7-irons have 55 grams of tungsten low in the toe and heel. This creates a 12 percent higher MOI than the previous CB and puts it on par with the AP2 714.

The MB 716, a fifth new model (not pictured), is a pure muscleback blade with a thinner topline than its predecessor. The muscle has been shifted higher in the head to improve impact feel.

Photographs by JAMES WESTMAN

LET'S DO LAUNCH

» Bridging the gap between your mid-irons and your 3-wood can feel overwhelming. The market is full of hybrids, high-lofted fairway woods, hollow-bodied utility irons—even plain old long irons. So how do you sort it all out? With a clear-eyed appraisal of how you play, and an open mind. Here are three hybrids that are meant to be hit with a more descending, iron-like blow. And a reminder: The best time to get custom fit for hybrids is when you're measured for irons.

These easy-to-hit hybrids help you attack more flags

By Mark Dee and Rob Sauerhaft



MIZUNO JPX-EZ

\$200; golf.com/mizuno

See those ripples on the bottom? That's Mizuno's updated (wider) "Shockwave" design, which weakens the sole to allow for more flex along the lower portion of the face—and more oomph on thin strikes. Plus, the new head shape—a larger footprint with a wider face and a flatter crown—pushes mass low and farther back, raising the MOI higher than its predecessor. The nonadjustable head has a maraging steel face that adds power that aspiring golfers need. Available November 6.



CALLAWAY APEX

\$220; golf.com/callaway

The Apex is designed to be the most versatile, workable iron-like hybrid in Callaway's fleet. An "Internal Standing Wave" weighting system makes sure of it, placing the club's CG a little higher and more toward the middle of the head than in previous models. With its neutral CG and slim shape, this better-player hybrid should gel with irons, producing a controllable trajectory with more than enough spin to make shots stick on the greens. As for distance, a 455 Carpenter steel face cup helps the Apex pack a wallop, delivering fast ball speeds on center and off-center hits. Available December 4.

TITLEIST 816H1 / 816H2

\$250; golf.com/titleist

The 816s feature many of the same technologies as the 915H and 915Hd, including a thin 455 Carpenter steel face and an "Active Recoil Channel" (ARC) to amp-up ball speed. Revamped shapes push the CG lower and deeper, which leads to a 1° higher launch, while beveled edges along the ARC sole provide a smoother ride through the turf. The 816s come in 2° loft increments, with a new "SureFit Tour" hosel that adjusts loft and lie in 1° intervals, making it easier to fit with your irons. The H1 delivers similar spin with a 7 percent higher MOI than the 915H, while the H2 generates less spin and a flatter flight than the H1. Available October 23.

Fall In!

Three new flatsticks will get your putting in line this season

By Mark Dee

» Whether you putt with a blade, a big mallet, or something in between, manufacturers are working overtime to upgrade your game on the greens. Fresh faces, bold alignment schemes, and a surprising amount of aluminum bolster these three new options with one goal in mind: to help you drop more putts this fall.

TITLEIST SCOTTY CAMERON FUTURA X7M

Borrowing its multimaterial construction from the popular GoLo series, both the stainless steel X7 and the X7M feature a lightweight aluminum sole plate and face. This creates a softer feel and more muted sound than the stainless steel face of the Futura X5s, which will stay on the market. It also weighs much less, allowing Titleist to make the X7s about 10 percent larger than the X5s—so expect longer sight lines, less twisting, and a larger sweet spot. The X7M adds two raised alignment rails and connects the two wings with a “bar-back” design. All told, that gives it a 20 percent bump in MOI over the X7. Both are also available in a 38” “Dual Balance” version, which places a 50-gram weight in the grip above a heavier, 400-gram head. Available October 23. \$379 for standard lengths; \$399 for Dual Balance.

PING CADENCE TR KETSCH MID

The Ketsch Mid is 30 percent smaller than the original high-MOI mallet but keeps its big brother’s all-milled aluminum body and ball-width trio of sight lines. Ping mills variable-depth, variable-width grooves into the face, giving you the distance control of its “True Roll” technology. Ketsch Mid comes in a 350-gram setup or a 375-gram “Heavy” option with a heavier sole plate. The lighter club should work for players with faster tempos or those looking to bolster consistency on lag putts; the heavier one fits slower tempos or those in need of help on short ones. \$230 for standard lengths; \$260 for adjustable-length shaft.



GROOVE-Y

Variable-depth grooves get milled directly into the aluminum head.

CLEVELAND TFI 2135 - 1.0

According to Cleveland, one in five golfers sets up with their eyes over the ball. The TFi 2135 is for the other 80 percent of you. Its key component? The elevated alignment line, which is positioned 21.35 millimeters above the ground, level with the center of a ball. Traditional blades use an alignment line that’s flush with the club’s flange, which works well if you’re directly over the ball. But if your eyes wander, an optical illusion occurs—your alignment can appear perfect when in fact you’re misaligned, which leads to poor contact and missed putts. The TFi’s elevated aid adjusts (and doesn’t distort) as your sight line shifts, so you can take dead aim no matter how you stand. The soft face—an aluminum-copper alloy backed by a low-density copolymer—adds to this high-tech update on a classic shape. \$130.

LINE'ER UP

The elevated alignment aid helps you aim properly.



FACE TIME

Scotty Cameron fused ideas from across his lineup—including a light aluminum face—to create the X7M.



WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Here's your chance to look inside a driver head.



Out of This World



1



2



3

Cobra's King LTD boasts a space-age design—literally!

By Rob Sauerhaft

» Cobra went to the ends of the earth—and beyond—to develop its new King LTD driver. The company partnered with the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space, a government-run laboratory, on a research project that took place on the International Space Station. The mission: to study and improve materials. "We can study things in space that we simply cannot study on Earth," says Mike Yagley, Cobra's director of research and testing. In this case, Cobra investigated properties of metal alloys used in clubmaking.

Clearly, the King LTD driver gets its design inspiration from the Space Station itself. Check out the translucent window in the sole ①, which resembles the Space Station's observatory module. Removing the 16-gram aluminum-and-polycarbonate

disk allows you to peek inside the titanium body. You'll see the back of the multi-thickness face ②, which helps maintain ball speeds on off-center contact, as well as the short, thin adjustable hosel (designed to lower CG) and a carbon fiber crown ③ that's 20 percent lighter than standard carbon crowns. These features save 20 grams, which Cobra engineers shifted lower and deeper to drop the CG and boost MOI. (The weight is concentrated in the disk and in a 12-gram plug that's behind the disk.) Cobra brass says the King LTD has the lowest CG on the market. Company testing shows faster ball speeds, higher-launching shots with less spin and longer drives than those produced by competitors' models.

\$450; golf.com/cobra

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GOLD

Where the Game Meets the Good Life

1 Hamilton Grand Luxury Apartments

\$1,900,000 to \$11,500,000

In 2009, Herb Kohler bought this iconic redbrick building (formerly a hotel and later a St. Andrews University residence hall) overlooking the Old Course's 18th hole. After a spectacular refurbishing, it now features 26 upscale apartments (2-, 3- and 4-BRs) and a seventh-floor deck with singular views. If you were any closer to the course, you'd need a caddie. savills.co.uk, +44 (0)131-247-3711

WHAT
IT COSTS
TO LIVE
IN...

St. Andrews

By Craig Morrison

IF THIS YEAR'S British Open left you longing to own property in St. Andrews, welcome to the club: In no other provincial town in the British Isles does real estate demand outstrip supply as it does in the Auld Grey Toon (pop. 16,680).

"It's a mile ahead of anywhere else its size," says Jamie Macnab, a director at Savills, which brokers most of the high-end deals in town. And it's particularly appealing to foreigners.

Fully half of the luxury dwellings that overlook the Old Course go to overseas buyers, Macnab says.

For golfers, the local attractions are obvious, from the seven courses run by the St. Andrews Links Trust, to Kingsbarns, the Duke's and a pair of sporty offerings at Crail. Full-time residents are eligible for the revered "links ticket," which for \$630 annually grants access to all the St. Andrews

tracks. In the summer, when there's daylight until 10 p.m., the courses (and town) bustle with tourists. In the quieter off-season, you can zip around the windblown links, albeit in Gore-Tex and a wool cap, in three hours flat. Another 18, anyone?

"Buy a place here and chances are your investment will strengthen," Macnab says. "At any rate, I guarantee your game will improve."



2 Townhouse Hotel

\$1,500,000

Fancy your own B&B? This 9-BR property in the town's hotel district has distinct owners' quarters (for you and the family) and several guest rooms. Disclaimer: You'll want to learn how to prepare a full Scottish breakfast. clarksonhamilton.co.uk, +44 (0)159 226 8608

3 Budget Bungalow

\$305,000

Not all St. Andrews real estate approaches (or tops) seven figures. This practical, ready-to-live-in 1970s bungalow makes a great crash pad, and there are more like it available. It's been updated inside and attractively appointed, with gardens in the front and back. And it's just a 15-minute stroll from the first tee of the Old Course. rollos.co.uk, +44 (0)133 465 4081



4 Art Deco Family Home \$800,000

This semidetached whitewashed villa at 83 Hepburn Gardens has five bedrooms, stripped wooden floors and original features. It was designed in the Art Deco style—its distinct architectural similarities to the 1935 Royal Birkdale clubhouse are immediately obvious. Bonus points for its gardens, garage and peaceful location in the St. Andrews 'burbs.

paganosborne.com,
+44 (0)133 486 2898



5 Panoramic Top-Floor Duplex \$1,400,000

It needs a little TLC, but this venerable 3-BR apartment above the Old Course's 18th fairway serves up priceless views of the linksland and the coast. A roof terrace could be added, subject to permitting approvals, and the attic rooms could be converted into more living space. Good luck managing endless calls from your pals when the Open comes to town. savills.co.uk, +44 (0)131 247 3706

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The Best Thing I Ever Ate*

(*while at a Golf Course)



Who better to nominate the game's best nosh than the world's best chefs? From Dover sole to Thai cheese-steaks, sometimes you shouldn't settle for a dog at the turn.

By Josh Sens

THOMAS KELLER



Executive chef at The French Laundry, Yountville, Calif., and Per Se, New York City

» **SEVERAL YEARS** ago, the three-Michelin-star chef swapped his kitchen whites for a collared shirt and lit out for a few rounds in Ireland, most memorably at Old Head, the course renowned for its vertiginous location atop a sheer-sided ocean promontory. From the clubhouse dining room, the water views were stunning. What they pulled from the Atlantic was just as sweet. "The first night there, we had black sole, which is actually Dover sole, with steamed spinach, boiled potatoes and a nice Chablis," Keller recalls. "It was all so good, we ordered the same thing for lunch the next day."



Stratta vouches for the chicken and steak satays (above) at Bali Hai.

ALEX STRATTA



Executive chef at Tapas by Alex Stratta at Tivoli Village, Las Vegas; former Iron Chef Italian on *Iron Chef America*

» **WHAT HAPPENS** in Vegas stays in Vegas, including Stratta's post-round lunch. "Food always seems to taste better after a morning of golf, but I especially love the chicken and steak satays at Cili at Bali Hai Golf Club." Bali Hai sits on the Strip, but its swaying palm trees evoke the fictional South Pacific enchantment for which the

track is named. Stratta says the food is transportive, too, which is why he sticks around when it's time to eat.

MING TSAI



Chef-owner of Blue Ginger, Wellesley, Mass.; host of *Simply Ming* on American Public Television

» **AN UNREFORMED** golf addict, Tsai rarely passes on a chance to play. He also doesn't miss out on many meals. His favorite club grub? Don't get him started. "The turtle soup at Pine Valley is spot-

on," he says, "and the burger dog at the Olympic Club is so inspired, I put it in my cookbook, *Simply Ming*." He loves the "tasty, wood-fired pizzas" at Kukio on the Big Island of Hawaii, and the Thai cheesesteak sandwich at Cascata in Las Vegas, "which they deliver to your cart with a click-in room service tray." At his home club of Charles River, just outside Boston, he's partial to a sandwich called the Sand Trap, "which is a crazy good, tuna-melt-like panini on pita, with bacon." It holds him over—at least through nine.

MASAHIRO MORIMOTO



Sushi chef extraordinaire and the original Iron Chef

» **AT WAIALAE** Country Club, in Honolulu, the 13th green is patterned after the famed Biarritz hole in France, the eighth is an homage to the Redan hole at North Berwick, and the 16th mimics traits of the sixth at National. The cooking reflects wide-ranging influences, too, drawing on currents from around the Pacific Rim. Morimoto, a Waialae member with eclectic tastes, almost always opts for the same clubhouse special: oxtail soup. The meat is rich and fork-tender, the broth bold, bright and flecked with cabbage, peanuts and Chinese parsley, with a side of grated ginger for a little extra spike.

MARIO BATALI



Chef, cookbook author, TV personality; James Beard Foundation "Outstanding Chef of the Year" in 2005

» **BATALI OFTEN** has the shanks. He just calls them "osso buco," the braised veal dish that stars at a number of his restaurants. On the golf course, though, he favors lighter fare. Take the shrimp tacos he scarfed down at El Dorado Golf & Beach Club in Cabo San Lucas during the filming of *The Haney Project* in 2012. Or the oysters his buddy Emeril Lagasse grilled up last year at Cascata in Las Vegas during the golf charity event that Batali hosted. "Delicious," Batali says.



Those shellfish, not the shanks, were the cause of his slow play.

ROY YAMAGUCHI



Executive chef/owner of Roy's (22 locations nationwide)

» **LIKE A LOT OF** golfers, Yamaguchi falls prey to first tee jitters, and those butterflies don't flutter in an empty belly. "There's nothing better than a fresh, hot breakfast sandwich before you head out for a round," the chef says. He's particularly fond of the sandwich at Spyglass Hill in Pebble Beach, Calif.: "Applewood smoked bacon and egg, layered in a ciabatta roll with melted cheddar."

LOUIS MALDONADO



Chef at Spoonbar, Healdsburg, Calif.; Top Chef contestant

» **MALDONADO** doesn't keep score on the course. He does track what he eats, which is easy, because he always orders the same thing. "I'm a big fan of golf course patty melts," he says. He recalls his first one fondly. It was at Lone Tree Golf Course, a modest public track in Antioch, Calif. "Playing golf was a Sunday ritual for my dad and my grandfather, so I would go out and meet them on the back nine." Even then, he didn't count strokes. He didn't count calories, either. "My dad and grandfather thought I was there for the golf," Maldonado says. "But really I was there for the patty melt."

VIN DE BUTCH



Harmon knows grips, but does he know grapes?

Earlier this year, Butch Harmon—who has helped guide the likes of Tiger Woods and Greg Norman to vintage victories—paired with Broken Earth Winery in Paso Robles, Calif., to start his own wine club. The \$299 buy-in includes two bottles of **2010 Butch Harmon Block 25 Reserve Cabernet**

and a Harmon instructional DVD, among other goodies. (Big ask? Hey, it's about \$700 cheaper than a lesson with Harmon.) So, is his vino, which retails for \$24, any good? We asked master sommelier Brian Cronin for his take. "A straightforward, easy-drinking Cab, with a simple, fruity nose and some notes of cassis, currant, and black cherry," he says. "I would pull the cork on this and drink it any day." Yet another winner for Butch.

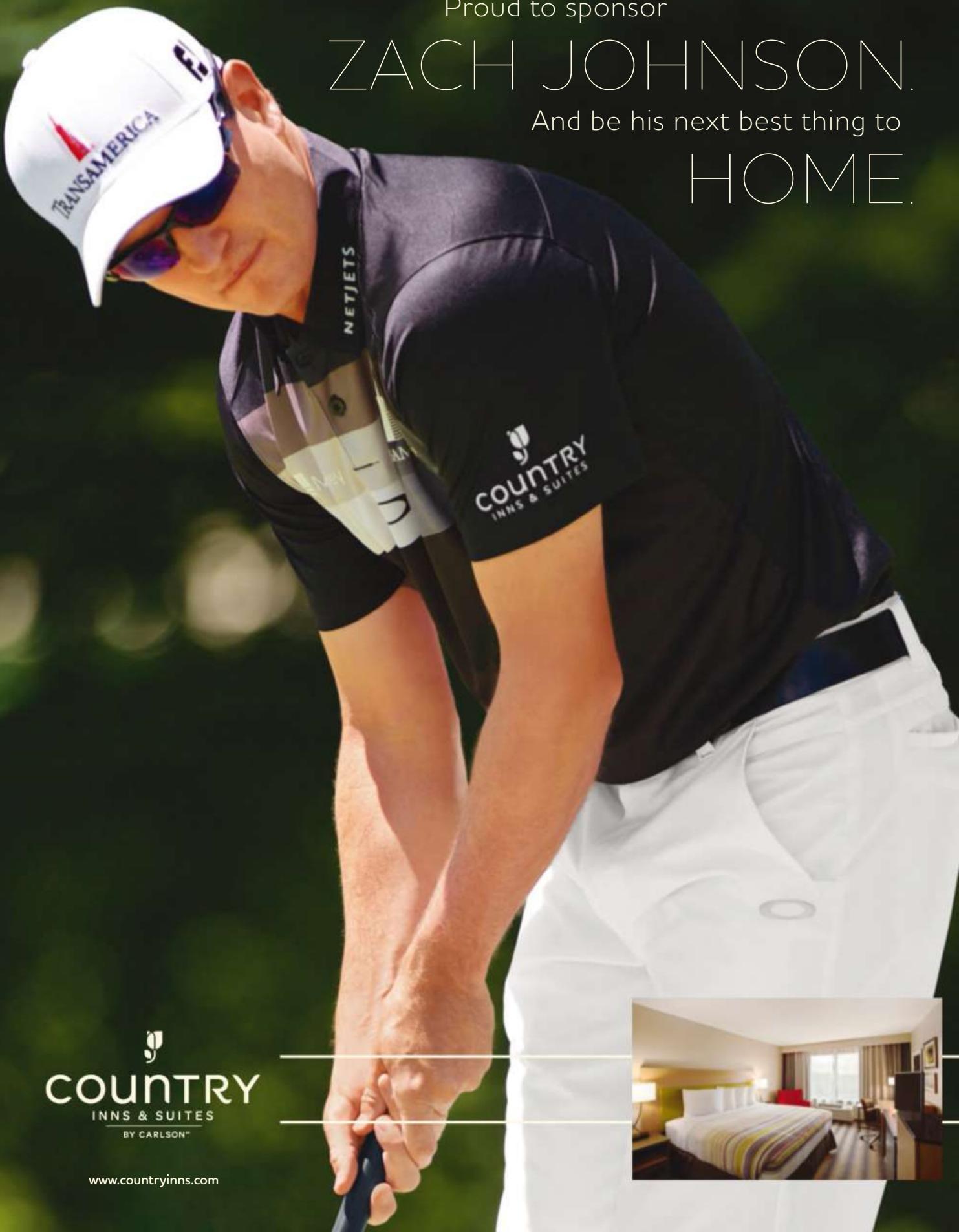
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ON THE ROAD WITH...

ZACH JOHNSON

The Champion Golfer of the Year on flying home with the Claret Jug, living out of the back of a Dodge and his (caffeine-free) jet-lag cure

» **There were a bunch of us** on that jet heading back from St. Andrews: Jordan Spieth, Harris English, Jason Dufner, Billy Horschel. A moment like that can be surreal when I think about where I once was and where I am. You never know how long it's going to last, but I try to enjoy every moment.

» **Back in my mini-tour** days, my house and my transportation were one and the same. My closet was the trunk of the green Dodge Intrepid that I drove everywhere, with my clubs stuffed in it and a bar that I hung my clothes from. On the rare occasions when I flew, I went economy and it felt like the ultimate luxury.

» **Mostly I deal with jet lag** with a pretty basic formula: I work out on the day of my arrival, stay up as late as possible that first night and then, when it's time to crash, crash hard. I've never had a cup of coffee in my life. Not because I think I wouldn't like it. I'm afraid I'd love it.

» **The upside to traveling** in more comfort is that it takes less of a physical toll and allows me to better enjoy my quality time. With my kids the age they are, that's my number-one priority.

» **I've been lucky with my luggage.** Once, at the 2007 British Open at Carnoustie, my clubs didn't show up till Wednesday. Overall, though, I've had the good fortune of never having to go without a fresh change of clothes.

» **My circumstances have changed,** but at heart I'm still that midwestern guy. On the road, I don't really need, or even want, five-star amenities. I just want to feel like I'm at home.



Claret chug: The mood was festive on Johnson's and Spieth's flight home from St. Andrews.



WHAT'S IN HIS BAG?

From an iPad to protein supplements, here's what Zach packs in his carry-on.



private

NOVEMBER 2015

LESSONS

FOR MORE INSTRUCTION THAT FITS YOUR GAME, GO TO GOLF.COM

To hit a reliable fade, align your body with the left side of the fairway, open the face slightly and swing away.



HOW TO FADE THE BALL WITH POWER

You don't lack for distance off the tee, but you do struggle to find the fairway consistently. You need a go-to shot that you can rely on under pressure. One of the easiest shots to produce—without sacrificing much, if any, distance—is the power fade. It's easy because you don't have to swing any faster than normal, nor do you have to manipulate the clubface. You only need to change your setup.

Tee the ball up on the far right-hand side of the tee box and choose a target on the left-hand side of the

POWER HITTER

You hit the ball a long way, but your game needs control and consistency.

fairway, between the center of the fairway and the left rough. Align your body to this spot. Position the ball slightly farther forward in your stance than you normally would, and tee it lower so that the equator of the ball lines up with the sweet spot of the clubface. This will promote a level to slightly descending blow. Finally, rotate the face open a few degrees and make your regular swing, focusing on the outside quadrant of the ball. The ball should start along your stance line and then curve back to the middle of the fairway.

STRAIGHT HITTER

You keep the ball in play, but a lack of distance puts pressure on your game.

'STACK AND STRETCH' YOUR WAY TO LONGER IRONS

Do you struggle to hit the green with mid- and long irons but excel with the short clubs? If so, you're probably not compressing the ball—that is, making a powerful, descending strike—so you're losing spin and distance. To compress the ball correctly, you have to get off your right side and onto your left at impact, which stops you from hitting up on the ball and catching it thin. A simple change to your setup and backswing will help.

STEP ONE GET STACKED

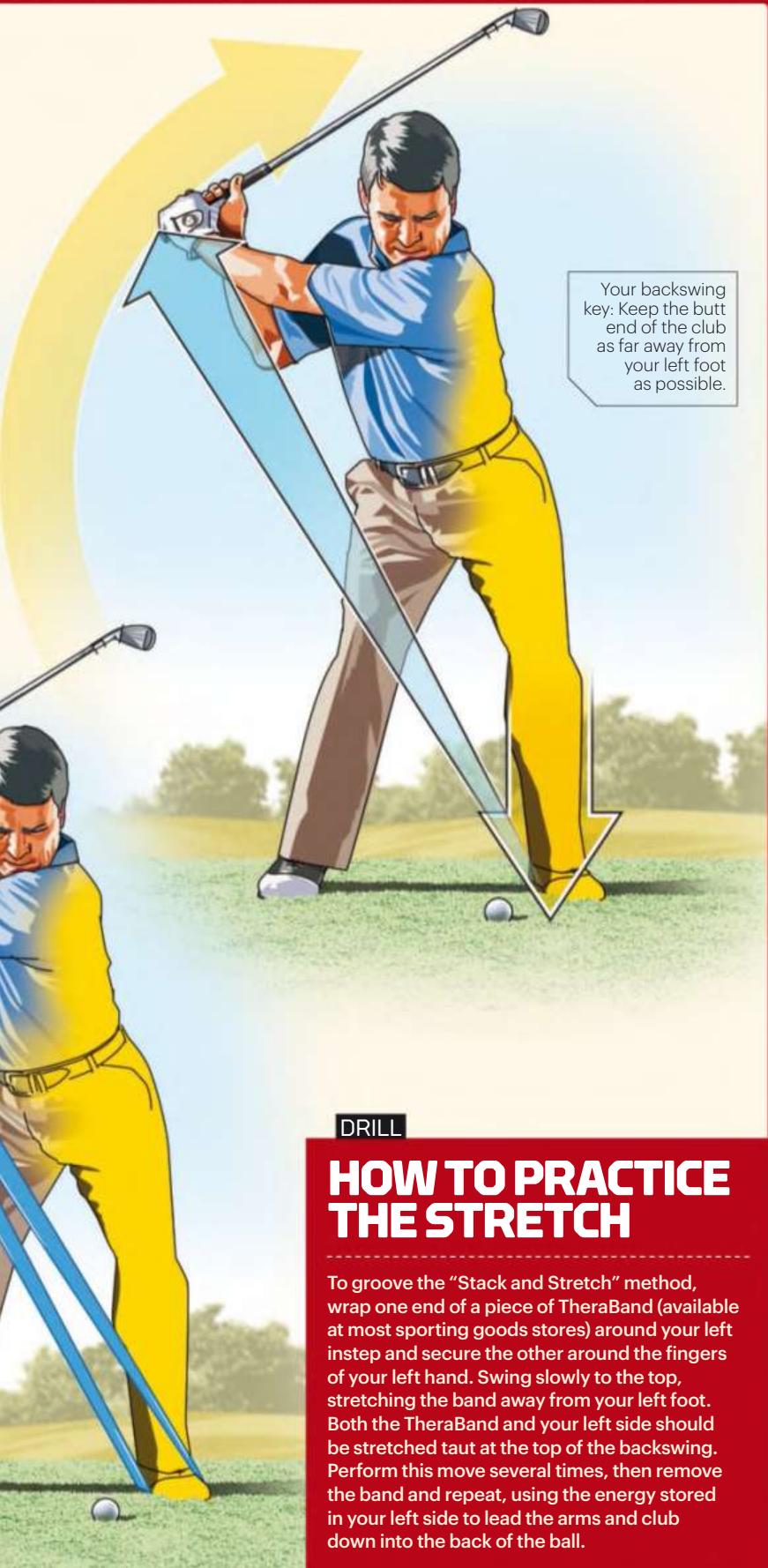
Take your normal address position, then shift your hips toward the target until your left hip is over your left heel. Keep your spine tilted to the right as you shift your hips. This "stacked" position lets you feel more weight on your left side.

At address, getting your left hip over your left heel properly "stacks" your weight for maximum compression and power.



STEP TWO GET STRETCHED

As you swing back, stretch the butt end of the club as far away from your left foot as possible as you keep your left heel planted on the ground and your weight on your left side. You should feel plenty of resistance in your left side. This, and the fact that your weight has shifted to the left, lets you hit down and compress the ball with maximum energy.



To groove the correct move, attach a TheraBand to your left foot and left fingers and slowly stretch it tight as you swing back.

Your backswing key: Keep the butt end of the club as far away from your left foot as possible.

DRILL

HOW TO PRACTICE THE STRETCH

To groove the "Stack and Stretch" method, wrap one end of a piece of TheraBand (available at most sporting goods stores) around your left instep and secure the other around the fingers of your left hand. Swing slowly to the top, stretching the band away from your left foot. Both the TheraBand and your left side should be stretched taut at the top of the backswing. Perform this move several times, then remove the band and repeat, using the energy stored in your left side to lead the arms and club down into the back of the ball.

**SENIOR
PLAYER**

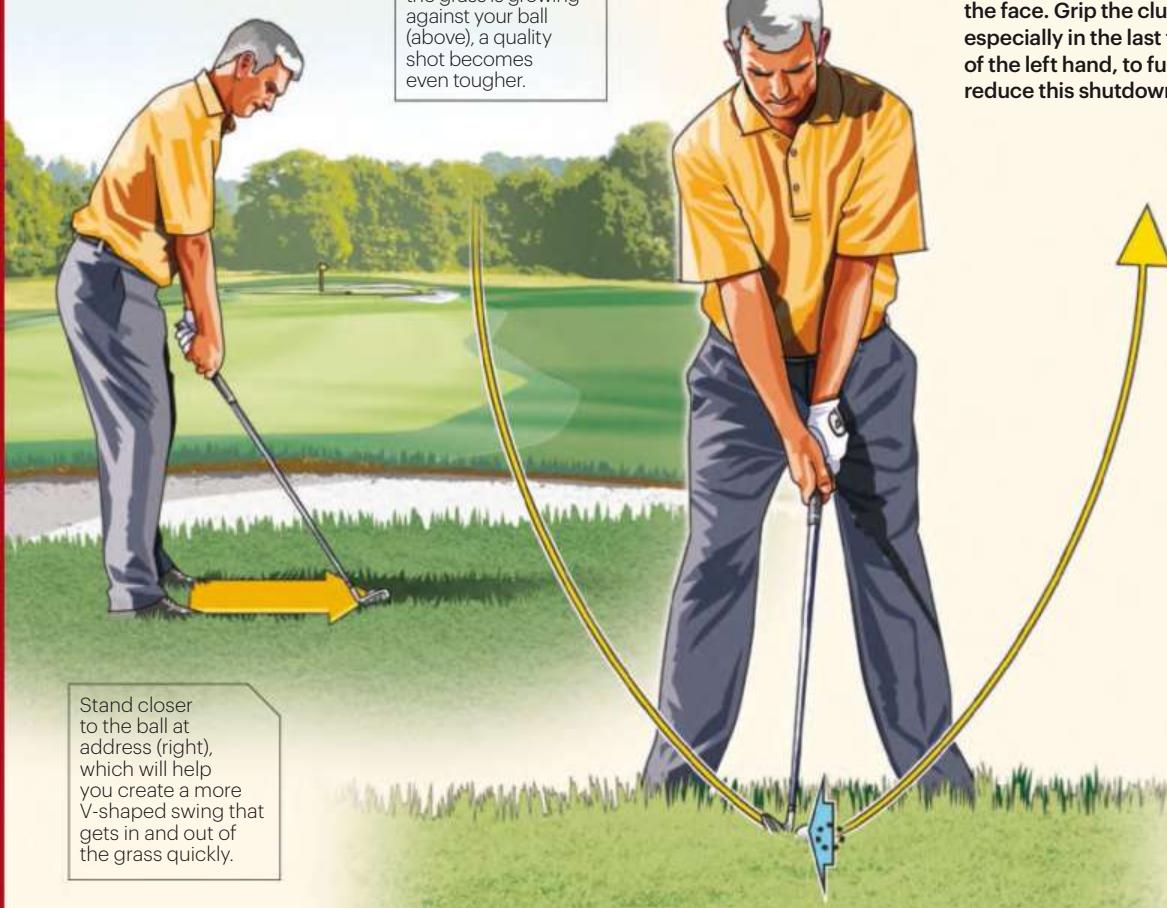
You've lost some flexibility and power, but you still know how to score.

ESCAPE THE TRICKIEST ROUGH

Your tee shot finds the right rough, all but eliminating your hopes of reaching the green in two. Oh, and it gets worse. The grass is growing away from the target and toward your ball, so solid contact is even tougher to achieve. Yet with some setup adjustments, you can still knock it on the green, or close, and save your par. Here's how.



Hitting a decent shot out of the rough is difficult enough, but when the grass is growing against your ball (above), a quality shot becomes even tougher.

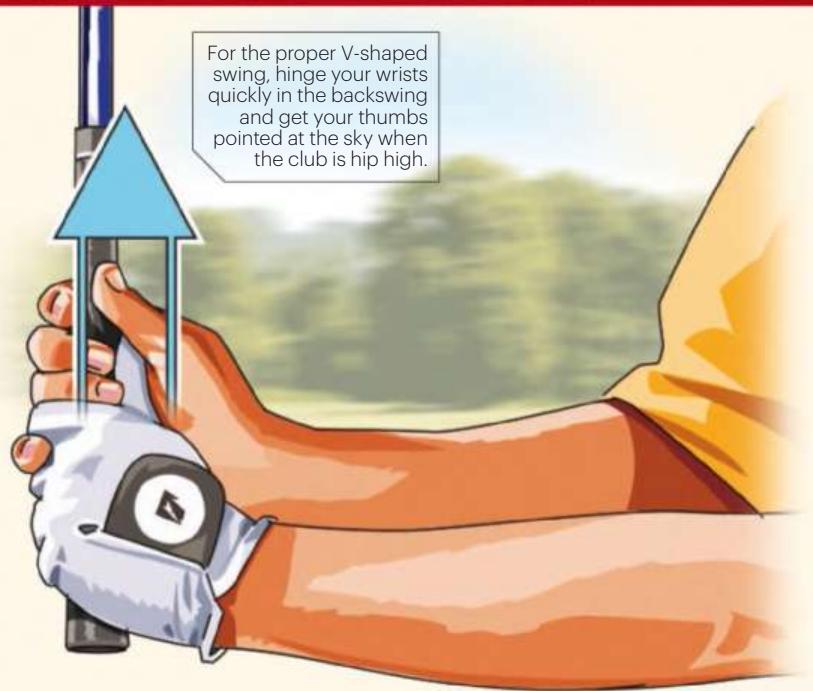


STAND CLOSER TO THE BALL

Take one extra club (say, a 6-iron instead of a 7-iron) and stand closer than usual to the ball to promote a more vertical, V-shaped swing. An up-and-down swing catches less grass and more ball, leading to much better contact. Play the ball an inch or two farther back in your stance and open the clubface a few degrees to offset the tendency for the grass to shut the face. Grip the club tighter, especially in the last three fingers of the left hand, to further reduce this shutdown effect.

HINGE YOUR WRISTS EARLIER

The other key to advancing the ball far out of the deep rough is to set the wrists earlier than normal on the backswing. This helps create the sharp, descending angle you need to keep the grass from slowing down the clubhead and closing the face. When you take the club back, point your thumbs to the sky as your hands reach about hip height. This promotes the earlier hinging of the wrists that you need. The rest of the swing remains the same—don't swing harder or gouge the ball out of the grass. Simply let your setup and steeper attack angle do the work.



For the proper V-shaped swing, hinge your wrists quickly in the backswing and get your thumbs pointed at the sky when the club is hip high.

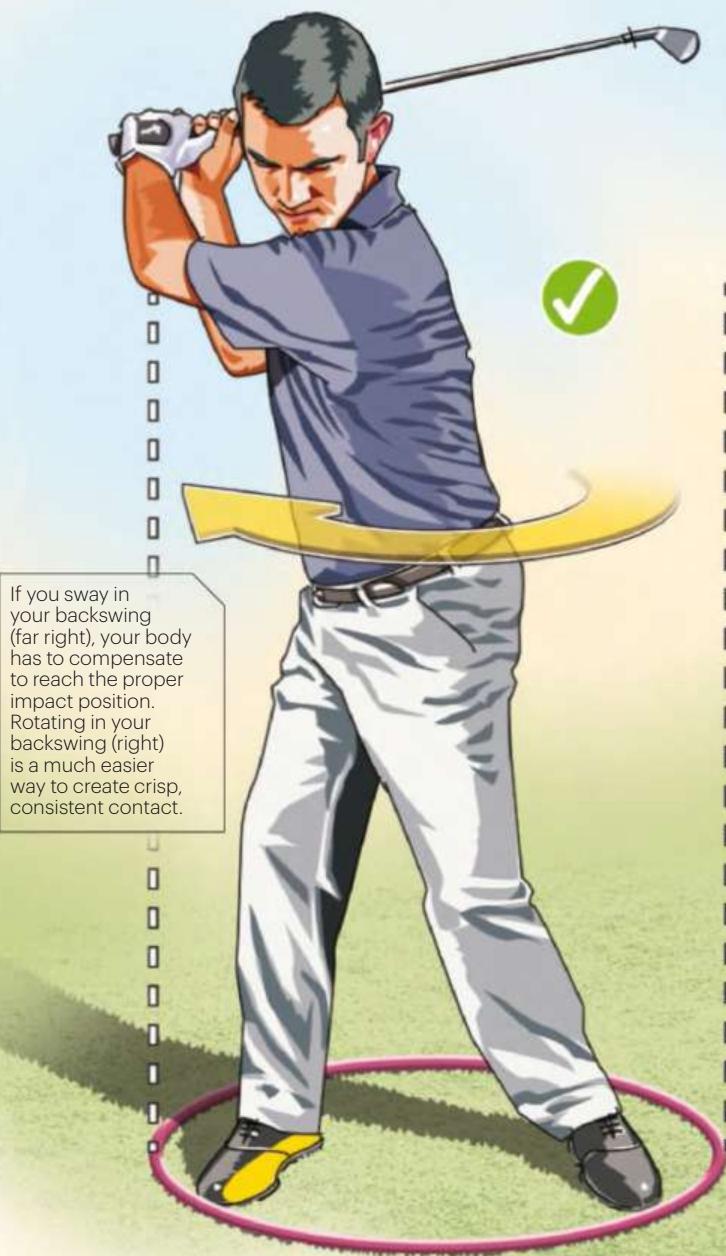


No need to swing harder than you normally do—your setup and steep attack angle do the work for you.

**HIGH
HANDICAPPER**

You have potential but must fix some fundamental swing flaws.

ONE EASY MOVE FOR PERFECT IRON CONTACT

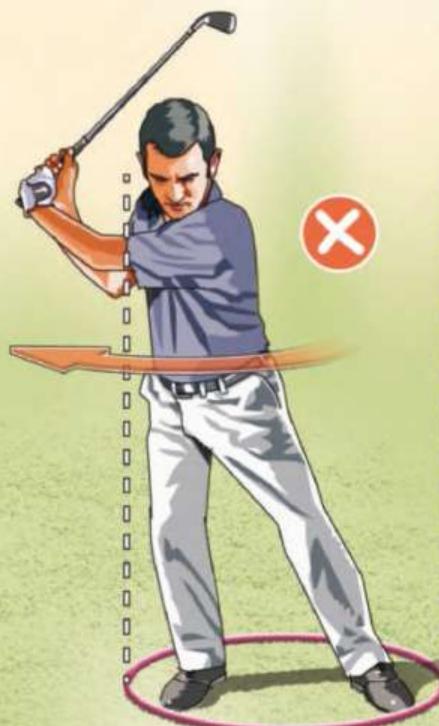


One of the most memorable and useful images from Percy Boomer's instruction classic, *On Learning Golf*, is that of a player turning his body inside a barrel. When you slide your hips rather than turn them in a circle, you make it much more difficult to establish a consistent bottom point to your swing and hit the ball solidly.

One way to simulate the barrel image while practicing is to make imaginary swings with your feet inside a hula hoop or a coiled garden hose. This helps you combat the urge to sway your hips on the backswing or to slide them too aggressively on the downswing, two errors that are major causes of fat and thin contact.

A FIX FOR FAT IRONS

If you tend to hit your irons fat, make some backswings without a ball, rotating your right hip inside the hoop. If your right hip strays outside the edge of the hoop, you're moving too far off the ball—your body will have to move back toward the target in the downswing, which is difficult to do consistently. If you turn your right hip back properly, inside the hoop, you'll feel some pressure on the inside of your right foot. Your upper body will also remain centered, making it easier to achieve a consistent low point to your swing, just ahead of the ball.



A FIX FOR THIN IRONS

If you tend to catch your irons too thin (meaning you rarely take a divot), shift your attention to the downswing and the position of your lead hip. If you slide your hips too much in the downswing, so that your left hip extends past the left side of the hoop, you'll hit thin or topped shots. But if you rotate your left hip within the hoop, your hip and your weight will remain over your left heel, promoting flush contact.



LOW HANDICAPPER

You play well but want to shave those last few strokes off your handicap.

GO TO YOUR BACKHAND

Hitting a blind shot with a backward club is easier than you think: Just hinge your right arm and then straighten it. Instant trick shot!



If you're faced with a backhand shot, use one of your wedges—they have the biggest faces of any iron. At impact, only the toe should pass through the grass (below).

During the second round of this year's Players Championship, Matt Kuchar's tee shot on the famous island-green 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass went over the back of the green and came to rest against the hazard line. Unable to take a stance, the right-handed Kuchar played a blind, one-handed backhand shot and chipped the ball to about 40 feet.

While this may seem like a case of Tour-level magic, the shot isn't that difficult to pull off, and it can be very useful. Take a wedge (they have the largest hitting area of any of your irons) and stand about six inches left of the ball, with your back turned to the target. Turn the face of your wedge around so that it, too, faces the target, with only the toe of the clubhead touching the ground. While keeping your upper arm as still as possible, hinge the club up by bending your right elbow and then slap the clubhead into the back of the ball. Make sure to strike down hard and straighten your right arm at impact. The ball will pop out nicely and get you out of trouble—you may even reach the green!

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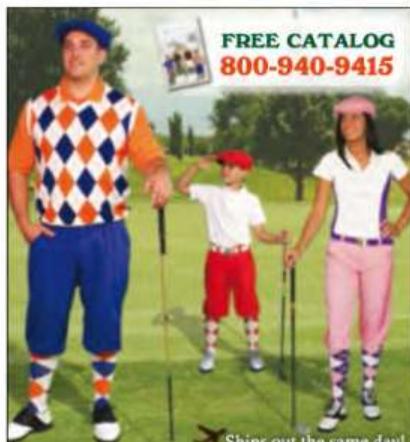
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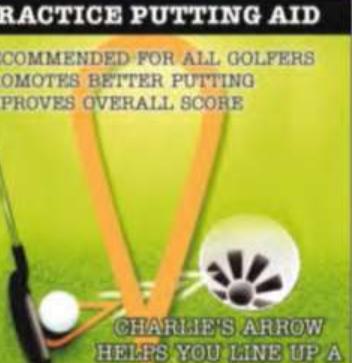
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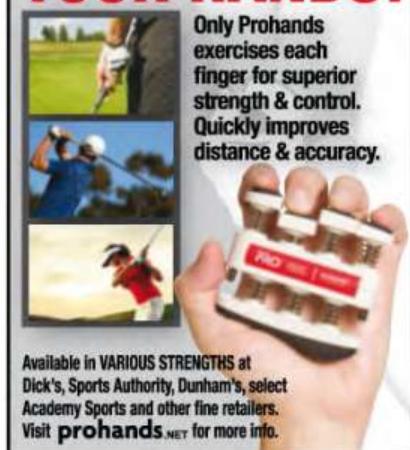
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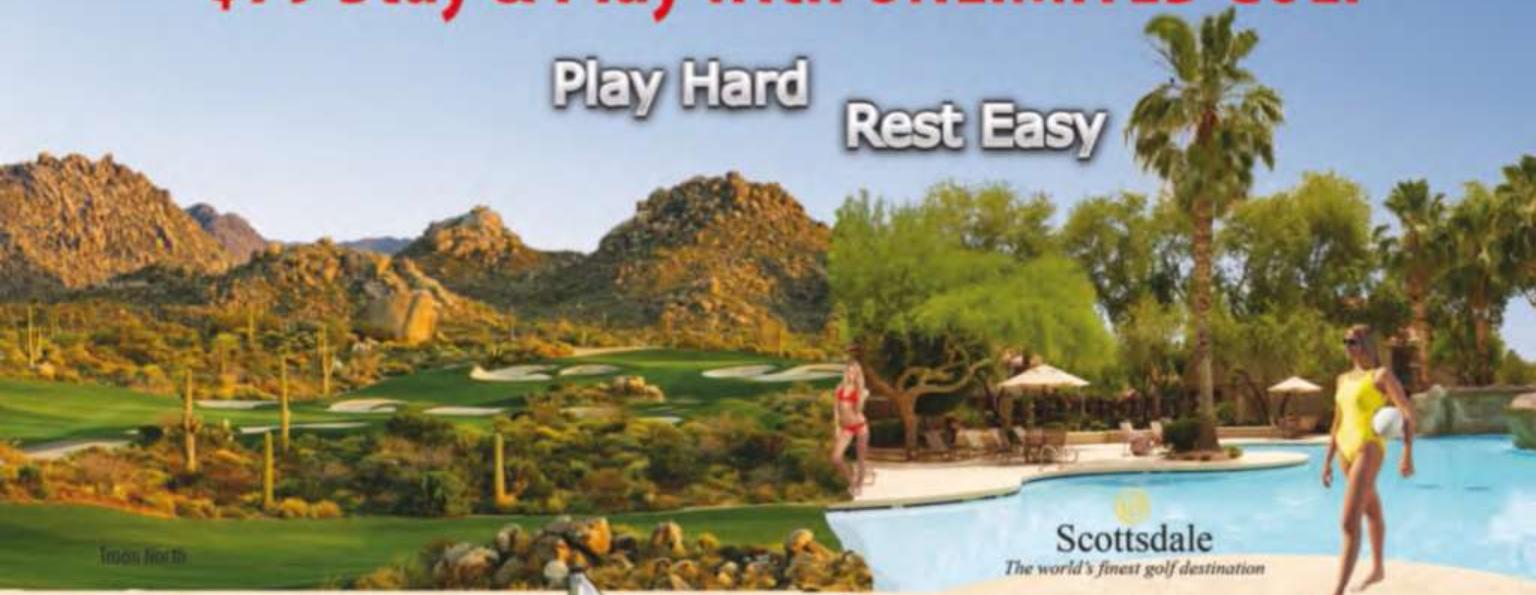
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A Fixer-Upper

» **EARLIER THIS YEAR,** Bubba was telling people he had no desire to fly 8,000 miles to Incheon, South Korea, for the Presidents Cup. His elders were able to talk him off the ledge. Still, you couldn't really blame him. To play in another road-trip no-juice golf exhibition after four grueling majors, followed by the FedEx Cup non-playoffs, at the end of a season that has no end? Gerry Lester had better things to do.

Anyway, B. Watson was talking about the old Presidents Cup, the one that existed before the PGA Tour commissioner, Tim Finchem, made the unilateral 12th-hour decision to lop four matches off the competition, reducing the total points in play from 34 to 30.

Finchem, true to form, never stated his actual purpose. He didn't need to. The matches have been wildly lopsided—USA! USA!—and the event was in danger of succumbing to a fatal case of indifference. Playing for fewer points would give the less-deep International team more opportunity to bench its weaker players. The Internationals and their captain, Nick Price, wanted the point change. NBC Sports and Golf Channel, broadcasters of the matches, would, of course, welcome a more competitive event. But Finchem's point-shaving move, announced just six weeks before the opening bell, was wildly unpopular among the American players and their captain, Jay Haas. Finchem despises controversy. So why did he do it?

Some of the American players and caddies had a theory: The Internationals had threatened to boycott the matches unless the terms were changed. The loudest voice for change, from what I heard, belonged to Louis Oosthuizen.

It didn't seem likely, but *something* had to explain Finchem's action. He cited (privately) a best-interests-of-the-game clause in the event's governing document, the Captains' Agreement. When I asked Ty Votaw, the Tour's chief marketer, if I might see the agreement, he said by e-mail, "We have not shared the

Can a format change save the beleaguered Presidents Cup?
It did this year.



Captains' Agreement with the media." It wasn't just "the media." As of Labor Day, despite Haas's repeated requests, the Tour had not shared the current Captains' Agreement with the American captain himself!

To try to solve this modest golfing mystery, over Labor Day weekend I drove from my home in Philadelphia to Norton, Mass., to see sweet-swinging Louie O. at the Deutsche Bank Championship.

As it happened, I broke a tooth on the way up, on a well-done thin-crust Margherita pie in Westport, Conn. I Krazy-Glued back the missing piece (not recommended), found affable Lou in the cart barn of TPC Boston and asked if there was any truth to the report of a threatened strike. He half-smiled and said, "We had a proper conversation." He was referring to a meeting in Akron, Ohio, on August 5, at the Bridgestone WGC event. On that day, Finchem met with Price, Oosthuizen, Jason Day and other International players.

Oosthuizen and the others told Finchem that the event was dying, that

benching players was a basic part of all team sports, and that having 12 golfers playing for 28 points was the fundamental formula that made the Ryder Cup so competitive. "We told him to copy something that works," the South African golfer said.

I asked Oosthuizen if his fellow South African, the industrialist Johann Rupert, a man embedded in international golf and in the lives of many South African golfers, had given him any good advice. For years, Rupert's message to Finchem has been that the commish has been effective for the PGA Tour but at the expense of global golf. Following the 1977 Ryder Cup, after the Americans trounced the Great Britain and Ireland team once again, Jack Nicklaus met with Lord Derby, the president of the British PGA, and suggested that the GB&I team expand its reach to include players from the Continent. In 1979, that meant Seve. In time it meant Langer, Olazábal, Sergio, et al. Jack's magnanimous gesture gave birth to the modern Ryder Cup.

"Johann said, 'If you really believe in it, stick to your guns,'" Oosthuizen said.

And then came Louis's moment of truth: "Had it stayed at 34 points, it would have been a massive decision as a team, but I don't think that we would have played."

A couple of days later, while sitting in a fully reclined chair, I asked my dentist to put on Golf Channel so I could listen to Jay Haas make his two picks. Phil Mickelson was his 11th man and Jay's son Bill was No. 12. Dr. Bookman, a recovering golfer and an avid sports fan, asked, "What is the Presidents Cup?"

The 2017 edition is at Liberty National, a short ferry ride from Wall Street and where Mickelson is a member. My guess is that Phil will captain the home squad there, and that the Presidents Cup will finally come into its own. Especially if—I write this before Phil & Co. even set sail for Incheon—the Americans never get to 15 points this year.

—MICHAEL BAMBERGER



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